Sunday, September 21, 2025 No 262 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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US delivers H1-B visa fee jolt; techies in panic mode

India go down fighting

Mooney ton trumps Mandhana heroics as Australia clinch series 2-1

P9

MARUTI SUZUKI

NEXA

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CM slams officials, gives one month to fix potholes

Tells agencies, heads of 5 corpns to coordinate better

BENGALURU, DHNS

After facing criticism for the poor state of roads in the city, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday set a one-month deadline for ensuring that all potholes are fixed and the roads are restored to good condition.

Siddaramaiah is said to have taken the officials to task for failing to finish the road repair works before the monsoons. Pulling up the engineers for their "inefficiency", Siddaramaiah said action will be taken against officials who fail to take steps to improve the roads.

According to the data presented to the chief minister, 14,795 potholes have been identified across the city and of these, only 6,749 have been fixed and another 8,046 potholes continue to bother commuters.

The chief minister has also instructed the commissioners of the five city corporations to review the progress on the ground and asked the Greatest Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner to hold a weekly meeting with all the five corporation heads.

A technical coordinator will also be appointed to coordinate between the five corporations.

Siddaramaiah also noted that there was hardly any coordination between the five corporations and the civic agencies such as Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL), Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) and the Bengaluru Water Supply & Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and urged the agencies to work in coordination with each other to meet the set deadline.

Pointing out that every constituency was sanctioned a grant of Rs 25 crore to fix the roads, he asked the officials to expedite the process and raise a request with the finance department if more funds are required.

He also asked the officials to utilise Jetpatcher machines to fill the potholes during the rainy season.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, on Saturday, also said the government was committed to fixing the pothole problem in the city and work was going on a war footing.

Earlier this week, the government had to face the heat from the citizens and IT industry leaders after Shivakumar said the companies cannot blackmail the government over infrastructure issues.

The deputy chief minister's comment came after a tech company CEO posted on X that the company was mulling on moving out of outer ring road (ORR) owing to the poor state of roads and infrastructure.

On Saturday, the Peenya Industries Association too highlighted the poor state of roads in the city and told D K Shivakumar, who holds Bengaluru development portfolio, that many companies may move to neighbouring states which are providing better infrastructure.

RUINED ROADS

- Number fixed: **6,749**
- Potholes yet to be fixed: **8,046**
- White topping work in progress on **143.68 km of road**
- Asphalting completed on **401.63 km roads**
- Asphalting in progress on **440.92 km roads**
- Various development works in progress on **584.60 km roads**

"I will hold two meetings in the next one month. I will take strict action if any shortcoming is found."
Siddaramaiah

Residents hold peaceful protest

Residents of several societies along Varthur Road gathered on Saturday morning to form a peaceful human chain, demanding immediate action to repair the dangerously damaged stretch between Gunjur and Varthur Kodi. The protest, organised in front of Prestige Lakeside Habitat, saw hundreds of residents, including children and senior citizens, standing with placards calling for safer roads.
Details on Page 3

Bridge work adds to woes

It takes close to half an hour just to cover less than a one-kilometre stretch near Varthur Kodi in Muthasandra. While one side of the bridge is ready, work on the second bridge — heading towards the Varthur police station — has been abandoned for the past three years.
Details on Page 3

Soldier dies in J&K encounter, JeM ultras said to be trapped

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

An Army soldier was killed on Saturday in a gunfight with terrorists along the Doda-Udhampur border in Jammu and Kashmir, where three to four Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) operatives are believed to be trapped.

The encounter broke out in the forested Dudu-Basantgarh heights after the Army and J&K police launched a joint operation on specific intelligence inputs, officials said.

The Army's White Knights Corps initially reported the contact in Kishtwar, but later clarified that the gunfight was taking place on the Doda-Udhampur border. One soldier, who was injured, succumbed at a hospital.

The region has witnessed a deadly encounters over the past year. On June 26, security forces killed Haider, a top JeM commander who had operated in the Dudu-Basantgarh forests.

Officials said the latest gunfight points to attempts by Pakistan-based groups to push infiltrated terrorists into the Pir Panjal belts.

Survey: Vokkaligas take stand; DKS to clear muddle

To identify as Hindu religion, caste as Vokkaliga

BENGALURU, DHNS

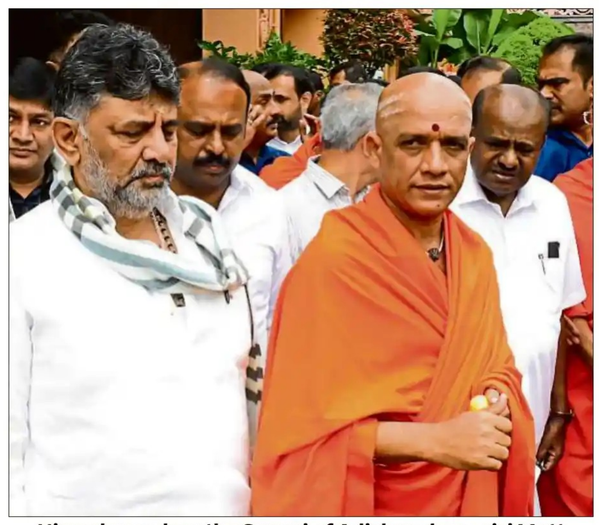
The 'dominant' Vokkaligas demonstrated their strength on Saturday as leaders from across party lines came together to discuss the upcoming Social & Educational Survey, and top pontiff Nirmalanandanatha Swami issued a stern message that the community should not get divided.

It was decided that all Vokkaligas must identify their religion as 'Hindu' and caste and sub-caste as just 'Vokkaliga' bearing code A-1541.

"Sub-caste should be mentioned only if it is absolutely necessary. It can be mentioned, for example, if a microscopic community with a small population wants to retain its identity," Nirmalanandanatha Swami, the pontiff of the Adichunchunagiri Mutt, said.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, Union Ministers H D Kumaraswamy, Shobha Karandlaje, Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka and others attended the meeting hosted by the Adichunchunagiri Mutt.

It is said that Shivakumar assured leaders that the community's interests will be protected.
▸ **Survey, Page 6**



Nirmalanandanatha Swami of Adichunchanagiri Mutt (centre), DyCM D K Shivakumar (left) and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy at the caste census consultation meeting in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Caste groups look to consolidate

In numerical strength lies political power. In line with this doctrine, almost all major caste and community groups are making efforts to consolidate themselves for the Social & Educational Survey starting September 22.
Page 6

Live-in nanny assaults 4-yr-old girl, flees with valuables

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

A live-in nanny allegedly attacked a four-year-old girl before fleeing the city with valuables from the house where she worked in Bengaluru.

The JC Nagar police registered an FIR on September 9 against Sabina Soren, the nanny, and Usmitha Bhunij, her friend, who allegedly threatened the complainant. *DH* has withheld the complainant's and his wife's names on request.

According to the FIR, the incident occurred on September 5. The complainant told the police that they were assigned Sabina after they sought services from the portal bookmybai.com. On September 5, they found out that, without informing anyone, Sabina had left after allegedly stealing Rs 15,000 in cash and gold ornaments worth Rs 25,000.

What further traumatised the complainant is that he learnt Sabina had assaulted his child in her stomach, neck and legs, the FIR noted.

On September 9 at 11 am, the complainant's wife received a phone call from Usmitha, who threatened her with consequences if they approached the police.

Following the complaint, the JC Nagar police booked the two suspects under Sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 306 (servant theft), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The child's mother later narrated the incident on social media. "A deeply disturbing incident has compelled me to share this here. Our live-in nanny, hired through BookMyBai.com, assaulted my 4-year-old daughter and stole jewellery and money from our home. To cover her tracks, she even removed all the CCTV SD cards from our cameras," she wrote on LinkedIn.

"They do not provide proof of background checks. We had to take their word for it; they refused to give any medical records; we were promised a nanny with prior experience — she had none. We interviewed and called home an approximate number of eight to nine nannies before we got tired and kept the current one - none of them had any experience; because of so-called 'training', they all quoted a whopping Rs 18,000 per month," she alleged.

Suspects traced to Assam: Cops

A senior police officer told DH: "Their last known phone location was in their native place in Assam. Efforts are underway to arrest them. The nanny had been living with the couple for a year before the offence occurred."

GST relief: Nandini ghee, butter to cost less from tomorrow

BENGALURU, DHNS: Nandini ghee, butter, paneer, and a few other products will cost less from September 22 as the Centre has slashed the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on these products.

According to officials from the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF), the price of one litre of Nandini ghee will come down from Rs 650 to Rs 610. Similarly, the price of 500 gm unsalted butter will drop from Rs 305 to Rs 286 and that of 1 kg paneer from Rs 425 to Rs 408.

Packaged drinking water is expected to cost Rs 18, down from Rs 20, for one litre.

Prices of many other products, including a variety of ice creams, cookies, cakes and muffins, are also set to come down.

According to a press release by KMF, the GST on ghee, butter, cheese and crunchy snacks has been reduced from 12% to 5%. Cookies, chocolates, ice creams, instant mixes, and packaged drinking water now face 5% GST, down from 18%.

No GST will be levied on Paneer and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk products. Both faced 5% GST earlier.

Amul cuts prices of 700 products

GCMMF, which markets dairy items under Amul brand, on Saturday announced reduction of retail prices of more than 700 product packs, including ghee, butter ice cream, bakery and frozen snacks, as it decided to pass on benefits of the GST rate cut to consumers.

Product	Old price (in Rs)	New price (in Rs)
Ghee (one litre)	650	610
Unsalted butter (500 gm)	305	286
Paneer (1 kg)	425	408
Packaged drinking water (1 litre)	20	18
Mozzarella cheese (1 kg)	480	450
Badam powder (200 gm)	120	107

SIT probes financial links in Dharmasthala case

MANGALURU, DHNS: The Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the mass burial case in Dharmasthala, has questioned several individuals linked to financial transactions related to the case.

SIT sources told *DH*, "Monetary dealings have now emerged as the central focus of the probe. Investigators revealed that multiple people had deposited money into the accounts of the complainant-witness, raising suspicions about a wider network." The officers said the financial trail could play a crucial role in identifying other persons connected to the case.
Page 5

TRACK TROUBLE

Members of the Kurmi community block railway tracks during a protest demanding Scheduled Tribe status at Muri railway station in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, on Saturday. PTI

CARDIO CARE

41,000 kids in state have congenital heart diseases: Data

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Close to 41,000 school-going children have been diagnosed with congenital heart diseases over the last three years in Karnataka, but less than 50% of these kids have received treatment, according to data.

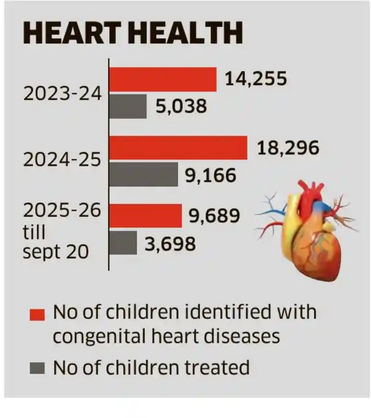
Screening done as part of the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) programme picked up these cases of congenital heart diseases, which refer to problems in development of the heart before birth.

"After the children are screened and the heart disease is identified, they are referred to tertiary care centers and a few other institutions which provide free treatment and are empanelled under the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust (SAST)," a senior official from the health department said. The official said these children are provided treatment under the Ayushman Bharat-Arogya Karnataka scheme.

"However, tracking and following up with each child is difficult on ground," he added.

To overcome this, the state health department is now planning to integrate pregnancy scanning with newborn check ups so that any anomalies identified during the ultrasound scans are available for paediatricians.

"Most of these congenital heart diseases can be identified in the anomaly scan done during pregnancy," said Harsh Gupta, Pricipal Secretary (Health). "However, data is not being recorded and is not available after the delivery. Hence, we want to integrate scanning details into the database and this will allow further follow up of such children."



Once the system is in place, any newborn identified with congenital disease will be marked as a high risk foetus and the doctors will be watchful of the baby's developments.

Early detection of congenital heart diseases can save lives.

"Early detection and treatment play a big role in determining the quality of life of these children," said Dr Kavya Mallikarjun, Consultant-Paediatric Cardiology at a private hospital on Old Airport Road. "If identified early and treated soon, the outcomes will be excellent and the kids can practically live life almost normally."

However, heart screening is not mandatory at birth in India.

"Most hospitals do basic screening soon after birth which includes a physical exam and, in some centres, pulse oximetry to check oxygen levels. But universal screening is not practiced consistently and is not yet standard everywhere in India," said Dr Pradeep Kumar D, Senior Consultant-Cardiology at a private hospital in Marathalli.

Quickly

State forms SIT to probe Aland voter deletion case

The Karnataka government on Saturday formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the Aland voter deletion case. In an order, the Congress government appointed B K Singh, additional director general of police (ADGP), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), to lead the SIT. Singh will be assisted by Saidulu Adavath, superintendent of police (SP), Cybercrime Division, CID, and Shubhanwita, SP, Special Inquiry Division, CID.
Details on Page 6

Pycroft to officiate Indo-Pak match again

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has once again assigned the high-voltage India-Pakistan Asia Cup Super 4s game on Sunday to its Elite Panel Match Referee Andy Pycroft despite PCB's repeated requests to strike him off the roster.

"Andy Pycroft is the match referee for Indo-Pak game," a tournament source told PTI.

Meanwhile, Pakistan team management has decided not to interact with media ahead of the Super4 contest.
Details on Page 9

TTD plans Venkateswara temple in Belagavi

The TTD board said it has approved the construction of a new temple in Belagavi, aimed at benefiting devotees from North Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra.

The announcement was made by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams board member S Naresh Kumar at a press conference held at Sri Venkateswara Temple in Malleswaram.The temple is proposed near Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi and will be constructed through the Srivani Trust.
Details on Page 6

Tentative dates for PU, SSLC exams

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has announced the tentative schedule of 'Annual Exam-1 and 2 of 2025-26' for the SSLC and PUC 2.

The PUC 2 exam-1 will be held from February 28 to March 17, 2026 and the annual exam-2 will be held from April 25 to May 9, 2026 across the state.

The SSLC annual exam-1 will be held from March 18 to April 1, 2026 and the annual exam-2 will be held from May 18 to 25, 2026
Details on Page 5

Probe ordered into Zubeen Garg's death

The Assam government on Saturday ordered a probe into singer Zubeen Garg's death and declared a three-day state mourning, as his wife Garima Saikia Garg appealed for peace during his final journey. Zubeen, best known for his 'Ya Ali' song, died in Singapore on Friday, while "swimming without a life jacket".
Details on Page 7

Rajnath to open Tata defence unit in Morocco

The first Indian overseas defence manufacturing facility is set to start in Morocco when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates a Tata owned armoured vehicle production unit in Casablanca province during his maiden trip to the north African nation.
Details on Page 7

DH on Sunday
DECCAN HERALD
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Dependence on other countries our biggest enemy: Modi

P7

US delivers H-1B visa fee jolt; techies in panic mode

Amount raised to $100,000 annually; to apply only for new applicants: Official

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, AGENCIES

President Donald Trump signed a proclamation to raise the H-1B visa fee to a staggering $100,000 (Rs 88 lakh) annually, a move that sparked panic and outcry among Indian professionals in the US.

But the fee would be applicable only to new applicants and not to current visa holders or to renewals, a White House official clarified on Saturday.

"The H-1B fee is likely to face legal challenges. But if it survives, companies that hire skilled international workers would have to pay $100,000 each year for any employee working on the visa, for up to six years. The fee applies only to new applicants," a White House official said, according to a report in the New York Times.

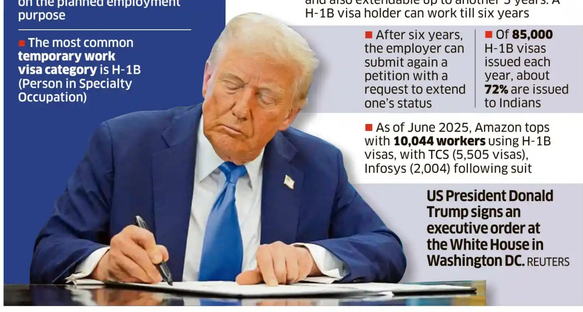
The measure was announced alongside the introduction of a $1 million "gold card" residency programme that Trump had previewed months earlier. Trump on Friday signed the proclamation 'Restriction on entry of certain nonimmigrant workers', saying the abuse of the H-1B visa programme is a "national security threat".

"The main thing is, we're going to have great people coming in, and they're going to be paying," Trump told reporters.

▸ H1-B visa, Page 6

ALL ABOUT H-1B VISAS

- To work in the **US temporarily as a lawful non-immigrant**, temporary workers must qualify for the visa category based on the planned employment purpose
- The most common **temporary work visa category** is H-1B (Person in Specialty Occupation)
- Till now, H-1B visas carried fees totalling around $1,500. Now, it will be **$1,00,000** annually per worker
- Usually, **H-1B** status is valid up to 3 years and also extendable up to another 3 years. A H-1B visa holder can work till six years
- After six years, the employer can submit again a petition with a request to extend one's status
- Of **85,000** H-1B visas issued each year, about **72%** are issued to Indians
- As of June 2025, Amazon tops with **10,044 workers** using H-1B visas, with TCS (5,505 visas), Infosys (2,004) following suit



US President Donald Trump signs an executive order at the White House in Washington DC. REUTERS

Tech firms' business continuity to be disrupted

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

US President Donald Trump's executive order to raise H-1 B visa fee to $1,00,000 (about Rs 88 lakh) per year will impact Indian tech firms and also techies working for global and Indian companies.

So far, Amazon (10,044 workers using H-1B visas as of June this year), TCS (5,505), Microsoft (5,189), Meta (5,123), Apple (4,202) and Google (4,181) have been the greatest beneficiaries of the visa programme.

Other beneficiaries include Infosys (2,004), Wipro (1,523) and Tech Mahindra Americas (951), according to data from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The number of H-1B applications has been capped at 65,000 (regular cap) and 20,000 (master's cap) for fiscal year 2026.

Indian IT firms such as TCS, Infosys, and Wipro rely heavily on H-1B visas to recruit talent from India.

However, the numbers have been reducing for a couple of years now.

IT industry body Nasscom said the country's technology services companies will also be impacted as business continuity will be disrupted for onshore projects and additional cost will require adjustments. It pointed out that India and India centric companies have been steadily reducing their reliance on these visas through increased local hiring in recent years.

▸ Tech firms', Page 6

US-India flight fares surge

Reports said that a one-way flight fare from New Delhi to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York surged to Rs 70,000. In a post on X, a user said, "All are rushing back to the US and are worried about the new H-1B visa rules." MakeMyTrip spokesperson told DH that there has been a notable increase in last-minute bookings to the USA.

ON FLAP 2

MEA flags 'humanitarian consequences'

India on Saturday said the Trump administration's decision to raise the annual fee for H-1B visas to a whopping USD 1,00,000 is likely to have "humanitarian consequences" and hoped that the "disruptions" will be addressed "suitably" by Washington.

Diwali travel, weddings cancelled

Panic and confusion gripped Indians in the US on H-1B visas on Saturday hours after US President Donald Trump's order to impose a staggering $1,00,000 fee on work visas, with many cancelling their plans to travel to India. While many cancelled plans to travel at the last minute, several others already in India are scrambling to return.

Modi's foreign policy has 'failed': Oppn

Opposition parties on Saturday alleged that the Modi government's foreign policy has "failed" after the fee hike for H-1B visas for highly skilled workers. The Congress hit out at PM Narendra Modi, accusing him of being "weak" whose preference for "strategic silence" and "loud optics" has become a liability for India.

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VISA FALLOUT: Urges US to address disruptions to families

India highlights its workers' role in the growth of US

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
NEW DELHI, DHNS

New Delhi reminded Washington, DC, on Saturday that the mobility of skilled professionals between the two countries contributed enormously to the development of technology, innovation, and economic growth in both India and the United States.

This came after US President Donald Trump recently raised the annual H-1B non-immigrant visa fee to $100,000 — around Rs 88 lakh, given the current exchange rate.

New Delhi urged Washington, DC, to address the disruptions that professionals from India in the US and their families might experience in the wake of this move.

After Trump signed the proclamation "Restriction on entry of certain Non-Immigrant Workers", employers asked many Indian professionals working in the US on H-1B visas to immediately return from work visits outside America.

RANDHIR JAISWAL
MEA official

"Policy makers will therefore assess recent steps taking into account mutual benefits, which include strong people-to-people ties between the two countries

India, accordingly, advised all its diplomatic and consular missions to extend all possible help to its nationals travelling back to the US in the next 24 hours.

"Skilled talent mobility and exchanges have contributed enormously to technology development, innovation, economic growth, competitiveness and wealth creation in the US and India," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement issued in New Delhi on Saturday.

The Indian diaspora's contribution to the US tax base is notable. Although they make up only 1.5% of the population, it is estimated that they pay about 5-6% of all income taxes (approximately $250-300 billion). Furthermore, their professions indirectly create 11-12 million US jobs, according to a report by non-profit organisation Indiaspora.

"The full implications of the measure are being studied by all concerned, including by Indian industry, which has already put out an initial analysis clarifying some perceptions related to the H-1B programme," said the MEA spokesperson on Saturday. "This measure is likely to have humanitarian consequences by way of the disruption caused to families. The government hopes that these disruptions can be addressed suitably by the US authorities."

The Trump Administration's latest move, which is likely to put a several Indian IT professionals in the US in trouble, came against the backdrop of New Delhi-Washington, DC, relations becoming strained since the US president imposed a 50% tariff on imports from India.

Engaging with US, IT industry to find way forward: Govt sources

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Indian government is engaging with the IT industry and the US administration to find a way forward on H-1B issue, sources said on Saturday noting that the application fee increase hits American companies even harder as they are significant users of these visas for highly-skilled professionals.

Sources said the Indian government is actively engaged with the US government, IT industry, and association Nasscom to arrive at a way forward on this.

Sources pointed out that given that US firms are major users of these visas, they, too, are actively engaging with the US government on the matter.

A look at the USCIS website shows that for FY25 (data as of June 30, 2025), Amazon topped the list of H-1B visa approvals at 10,044. In that list of top-ten beneficiaries, TCS (5,505) is at the second spot followed by Microsoft Corp (5,189), Meta (5,123), Apple (4,202), Google (4,181), Cognizant (2,493), JP Morgan Chase (2,440), Walmart (2,390) and Deloitte Consulting (2,353).

The top 20 list includes Infosys (2,004), LTIMindtree (1,807), and HCL America (1,728).

Telangana seeks Centre's intervention

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday said that the US President Donald Trump's decision to impose an annual fee of $1,00,000 on H-1B visas was unacceptable and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to look into it.

Saying that the move came as a shocker, Reddy said, "This is totally unacceptable in the historical context of Indo-American relationships. It is for the Indian Government to immediately set up a mechanism to resolve this amicably, keeping the interests of our tech population and skill workers, who have served America for so long. The suffering for our Telugu techies will be unimaginable. Requesting PM and EAM to resolve this issue on a war footing."

Meanwhile, Telangana's IT and industries minister, D Sridhar Babu, questioned why the Union government has been maintaining silence on the move. What is the hidden understanding behind this silence?, Sridhar asked.

"India is the largest recipient of H-1B visas globally. Naturally, the impact of this decision will fall disproportionately on our country. Yet, the Centre has failed to engage in pre-emptive diplomatic negotiations with the US to prevent such a blow," he said. He also asked the centre to secure temporary exemptions for current H-1B holders, ensure special provisions for Indian IT professionals, and take a positive decision for those dependent on remittances.

Govt's foreign policy failed: Oppn

Asks Centre to take steps to the resolve crisis

NEW DELHI, PTI

The opposition parties on Saturday alleged that the Modi government's foreign policy has "failed" after the US imposed a $ 1,00,000 annual fee for H-1B visas for highly skilled workers which, they said, is "meant to target Indians", and asked the Centre to take steps to resolve the "crisis".

The Congress hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of being a "weak PM" whose preference for "strategic silence" and "loud optics" has become a liability for India. Its president Mallikarjun Kharge said that foreign policy is about safeguarding India's national interests and keeping "India First" and not holding "events".

Highlighting reports that H-1B visa hike would hit Indians hardest, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said in a post on X, "I repeat, India has a weak PM."

Noting that Indian national interests are supreme, Congress chief Kharge took a swipe at the PM, saying, "Bear hugs, hollow slogans, concerts and getting people to chant 'Modi, Modi' is not foreign policy!".

"Foreign policy is about safeguarding our national interests; keeping India First, and steering friendships with wisdom and balance. It cannot be reduced to superficial bravado that risks undermining our long-term standing," Kharge said in a post on X.

"Birthday Return Gifts from your 'Abki Baar, Trump Sarkar' Government! — USD 100,000 annual fee on H-1B visas hits Indian tech workers the hardest, 70% of H-1B visa holders are Indians and 50% tariff already imposed, a loss of Rs 2.17 Lakh crore to India is already estimated in 10 sectors alone," Kharge said.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav slammed the government over the development. Speaking to reporters at the party office in Lucknow, Yadav said, "Your foreign policy has failed in the foreign (countries). Economic policies have failed. You have failed in making relationships."

Aam Aadmi Party convenor Arvind Kejriwal took a swipe at PM Modi, saying he appeared to be "helpless".

"Prime Minister ji, do something at least. Why is the Prime Minister of 140 crore people so helpless? Are you unable to handle anything at all?" Kejriwal said on X with a hashtag "h1bvisa".

AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi said the "ending of H1B visas was meant to target Indians" and accused the Modi government of reducing foreign policy to "gimmicks".

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray said the Centre's "stunning silence" means "absolute darkness" for those who depend on it.

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE
Congress president

"Bear hugs, hollow slogans, concerts and getting people to chant 'Modi, Modi' is not foreign policy!... Foreign policy is about safeguarding our national interests; keeping India First, and steering friendships with wisdom and balance. It cannot be reduced to superficial bravado that risks undermining our long-term standing.

ASADUDDIN OWAISI
AIMIM leader

"That the US is putting its relationship with India at risk is proof that it does not care about our strategic value. We are a strategic partner of the US, and if they don't see us as allies, then it is a failure of this govt. My complaint is not against Trump... My quarrel is with this govt: what did you achieve with Howdy Modi and Namaste Trump?

AADITYA THACKERAY
Shiv Sena (UBT) leader

"If "Atmanirbhar Bharat", "Make in India" and such other slogans would have been actually implemented, it wouldn't have been so chaotic. The weakening rupee against the dollar and the tariffs have anyway hit us hard, and as flowery or brave as the ruling party's talk may sound, we need to look at the stark reality.

ANXIETY

Travel for Deepavali, weddings cancelled

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, PTI

Widespread panic, confusion and concern gripped Indians in the US on H-1B visas on Saturday hours after US President Donald Trump's order to impose a staggering $ 1,00,000 fee on the work visas, with many cancelling their plans to travel to India.

While many cancelled plans to travel at the last minute while waiting to board flights to India, several others already in India are scrambling to return amid lack of clarity after Trump on Friday signed a proclamation to raise the H-1B visa fees, weeks before Indian professionals and their families travel to India for Deepavali and other year-end holidays.

Individuals on condition of anonymity stressed that the underlying emotion among H-1B visa holders and their families right now is that of "a crazy sense of panic" and "worry."

There are instances where people have cancelled their travel plans as they were waiting in line to board their flights to India across US airports on Friday, the moment news came through of Trump's proclamation 'Restriction on entry of certain non-immigrant workers' to raise the H-1B visa fee to $ 1,00,000 annually.

Uncertainty

An individual said about a person who was to travel to India for their own wedding and who has now cancelled plans amid the uncertainty this proclamation has triggered.

"This is a travel ban! Even if a person has a valid H-1B visa stamped on their passport, if they are travelling, or are on vacation, you cannot enter the US unless they have proof of the $ 1,00,000 payment. No one knows what the process is, what the fine print is. There's absolute panic," one of the individuals said.

"People who are standing in boarding lines at airports, people who are leaving for their own wedding tomorrow, things like that. They are cancelling because they don't know what to do," another person said.

There is also confusion around the fact that if people have an H-1B stamped and are currently living in the US, "what does that mean for me?"

"The biggest question that has come out is that you cannot leave the country," one individual said, citing the internal memos that major tech companies have issued to their employees.

These memos urged their employees not to travel outside the US or to return immediately before the September 21 deadline when Trump's proclamation comes into effect.

"The number one thing that all of the employers are just saying is that if you are inside the country right now, do not leave," another person said. "Those already outside the US are figuring out how to come back like today. Most people are scrambling to return to the US," another individual said.

"People had plans to travel to India for Diwali. They're all in a flux and not sure what to do. Families book tickets for Deepavali, for the December holiday season well in advance. This is the time when most people travel.

"This is the time when people actually want to leave and be with family during the holiday season. Now this has happened. Does that mean that I cannot travel this year? That's another sense of 'oh my god'," they said.

Bengaluru Sunday, September 21, 2025 Pages 22 Vol 78 No 262 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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The Power of Good

Malayalam superstar Mohanlal to receive Dadasaheb Phalke Award

P7

Travel *Page16*

Namibia: Where the desert meets the wild

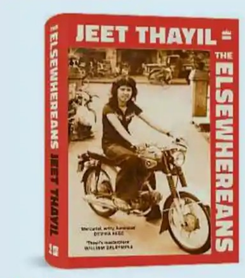
Namibia's vast deserts, rich wildlife, and ancient wonders create a timeless escape

Art & Pursuits *Page18*

Old craft, new yarns

Knitting and crocheting, thought to be 'old-world', have gained popularity in recent times among Gen Z men as a stressbuster

Books *Page15*



Life is elsewhere

In this 'documentary' novel, author Jeet Thayil builds a non-linear narrative where categories such as 'fact' and 'fiction' are porous

Food & Drink *Page17*

Sober by design

More restaurants are ditching alcohol menus, proving that food-forward dining is India's next frontier

Life on the edge of Assam's anti-immigrant campaign

Thousands of Bengali-speaking Muslim families face sudden displacement as Assam escalates its anti-immigrant drive

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI/GOALPARA, DHNS

People evicted from the Paikan forest in Assam, currently in a temporary shelter. DH PHOTO/ SUBHAMOY BHATTACHARJEE

INSIGHT

"We have no place to go now," said Momina Khatun, raising her voice above a group of Bengali-speaking Muslim men and women. After being evicted from the Paikan forest reserve in Assam, a few families have taken shelter on a plot of private land in the Chokuduha area of western Assam. "They just came and demolished our houses," said Khatun, about 70 years old.

On July 18, after 19-year-old Sakor Ali was killed in police firing during a protest against the eviction, they had to flee again. Nearly 50 families have now taken shelter on private land. "We do not know how long we will be allowed to stay here," said Aberun Nessa, a mother of four. Behind her, a group of evicted women cook under the open sky while children roam around the tin-roof huts.

A total of 1,080 families were evicted from Paikan forest, where concrete houses, schools, anganwadi centres and mosques were demolished with bulldozers. The forest department has planted 1.5 lakh fruit trees on 140 hectares of land. A school building near the entrance to Paikan forest has now been turned into a forest protection force camp.

The evictions have been widespread; thousands of Bengali-speaking Muslims have been evicted from forests, wetlands, village grazing land and other government plots since June. "We have cleared more than 40,000 acres of land since May 2021," Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters in Guwahati on July 15.

As anti-immigrant sentiments build in Assam, some Muslim communities in the state continue to grow wary. With Assam's decades-long problem of illegal migration from neighbouring Bangladesh remaining unresolved, Bengali-speaking communities have borne the brunt of political machinations, particularly ahead of elections.

With the Union government enacting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in 2019, the Bengali-speaking Muslims seem to have now been made the target in the state's fight against immigrants.

The BJP-led government claims that most of those who have been evicted are illegal migrants. Naushad Ali, 65, who lost his home in Paikan, however, questioned the allegations. "Let them check our documents before calling us Bangladeshis. We have had documents since 1951 to prove our Indian citizenship," he said.

Frail and unwell, Ali explained that he once lived in Haguripara village, a few kilometres west of Goalpara, but moved after the river washed away his home.

▸ Assam evictions, Page 2

A blurry future for teenage mothers

Teen pregnancy in Karnataka is driven by inequality and poor support, with profound consequences for young lives

SWEEKRUTHI K

AI GENERATED IMAGE

The SUNDAY STORY

Reports of a Class nine student giving birth at a government residential school in Karnataka's Yadgir district took the country by storm last month. What's more, the case was one among three similar incidents reported across the state over the span of a single week. Shocking details of the stories began to emerge — of extreme neglect and potential abuse.

Each of these cases' facts revealed a denial of basic rights of the young girls, now mothers. Sexual abuse, lack of healthcare services, low awareness, an absence of safe support and reporting mechanisms, are just some of the most egregious human rights violations that the girls faced.

At the state and national levels, declining numbers of teen pregnancies have been hailed as signs of progress. However, recurring cases of neglect and abuse, commonly affecting minors from vulnerable communities, point to systemic inequalities that are leaving the weakest worst off, even as conditions improve for some.

A closer look at the numbers from recent National Family Health Surveys corroborates these facts too. Overall, India has seen a decrease in the rate of teen pregnancy over several years. Yet, regional disparities are alarming — Tripura has the highest rate of teen pregnancy at 21.9%, more than three times the national average.

Further, while urban centres are seeing declining numbers of minors becoming mothers, rural regions continue to see twice the number of adolescent pregnancies as cities. Experts point to high vulnerability factors and low awareness as key causes.

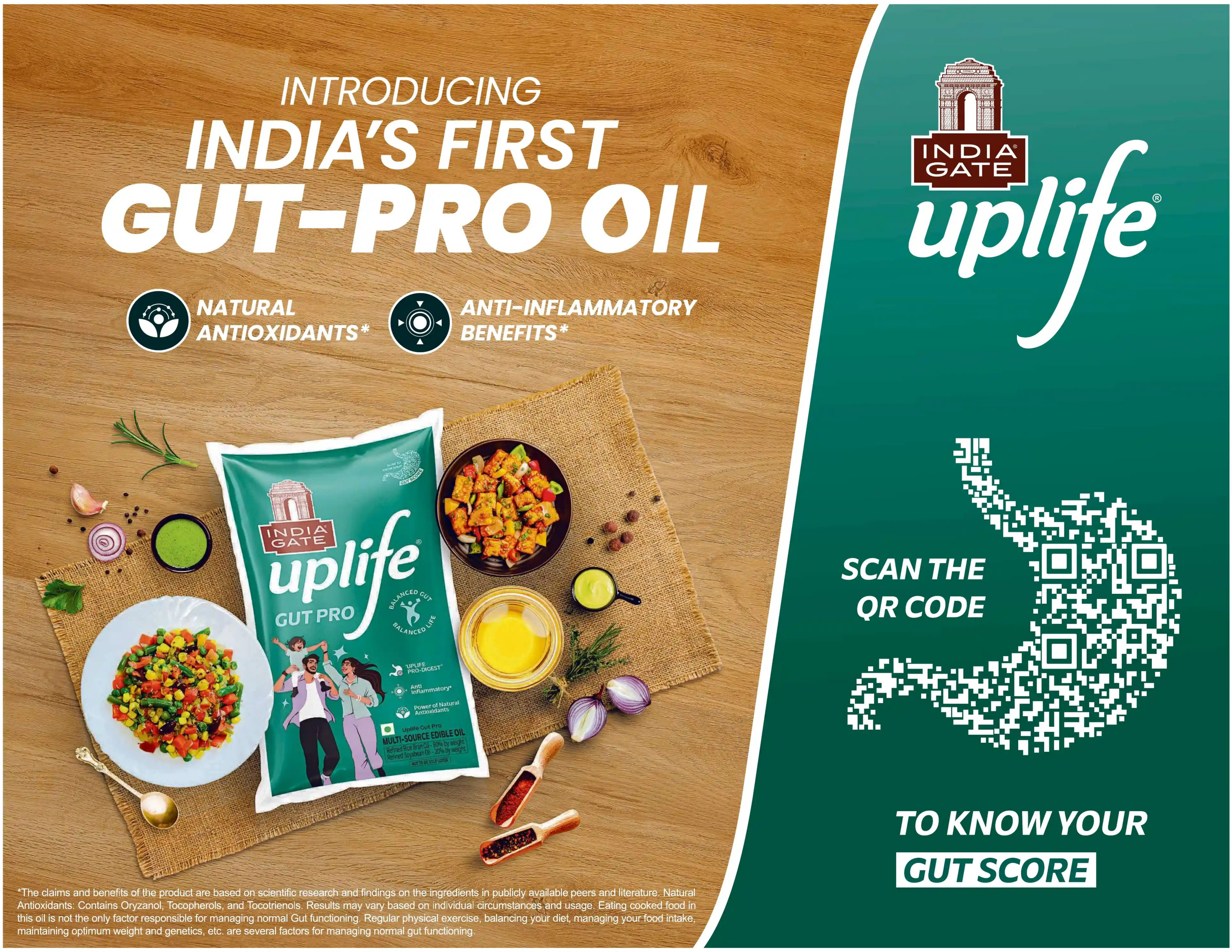
Additionally, despite gradually declining rates, the problem remains a large-scale one. Karnataka reported over 26,400 teenage pregnancies in a span of 10 months.

Impact weighs heavy

The reasons why the high number of cases is inherently concerning are multifold. Firstly, a large percentage of the numbers represent cases of child marriage. Others reveal instances of sexual abuse when investigated. Still others reflect low awareness about sexual and reproductive health and a lack of knowledge and access to contraceptives.

Secondly, each number represents significantly serious negative health and socioeconomic outcomes observed among young mothers and their babies. Babies of adolescent mothers face higher risks of low birth weight, pre-term birth and severe neonatal conditions.

▸ Teen pregnancy, Page 2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TO KNOW YOUR GUT SCORE
*The claims and benefits of the product are based on scientific research and findings on the ingredients in publicly available peers and literature. Natural Antioxidants: Contains Oryzanol, Tocopherols, and Tocotrienols. Results may vary based on individual circumstances and usage. Eating cooked food in this oil is not the only factor responsible for managing normal Gut functioning. Regular physical exercise, balancing your diet, managing your food intake, maintaining optimum weight and genetics, etc. are several factors for managing normal gut functioning.

Indigenous communities at risk

Assam evictions from Page 1

"My house here was on revenue land, not forest land as the administration is claiming," he said.

Mir Arif Ikbal Hussain, a lawyer at the Gauhati High Court, told *DH* that several evicted families have approached the High Court and the Supreme Court to challenge the government's drive.

"In their petitions, they stated they are not illegal settlers and that many had been evicted from revenue land. They also pointed out that they were provided houses under the PM Awas Yojana, electricity, schools, and anganwadi centres... In some cases, the court issued orders for status quo," he said. "Many even complained to the court that the government was targeting them because they are Muslims," he added.

The evictions in Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts in North Assam drew considerable attention, as the Muslim population in these areas is relatively small. Many in the region continue to believe that Bengali-speaking Muslims are carrying out a "demographic invasion," which has reduced indigenous communities to minorities in lower and central Assam.

The BJP often describes Bengali-speaking Muslims as infiltrators from neighbouring Bangladesh and a threat to the identity and culture of the Assamese. The party argues that Assam's long-standing problem of 'illegal migration' remains unresolved, and that such 'infiltrators' are occupying forests and government land, thereby altering the state's demography.

A few days later, Sarma made his position more explicit, stating that the eviction drive was targeted specifically at 'Bangladesh-origin' Muslims. "We will not evict the indigenous people as they have the right to live in the forests," he said.

The targeted evictions have impacted some indigenous Muslim communities, like the Deshi Muslims, which the BJP-led government had recognised as one of five indigenous Muslim communities in the region in 2022.

"We are not Bangladeshis; we belong to indigenous communities. Then why have we been evicted?" Ajufa Bibi, a mother of three children, asked. The family was also evicted from Paikan and has been taking shelter at a relative's home nearby. Her son, Hasinur will appear for his Class X board examination. "Can he study in such an atmosphere?" she asked.

Deshi Janagosthia Mancha, a forum of indigenous Deshi Muslims, said houses of at least 64 such indigenous Deshi Muslim families have been evicted during the ongoing eviction drive.

"This BJP government recognised us as an indigenous Muslim community. So, we urge the government to arrange for the rehabilitation of those evicted," said Mofiyal Rahman, a leader of the Mancha in Goalpara.

Politics

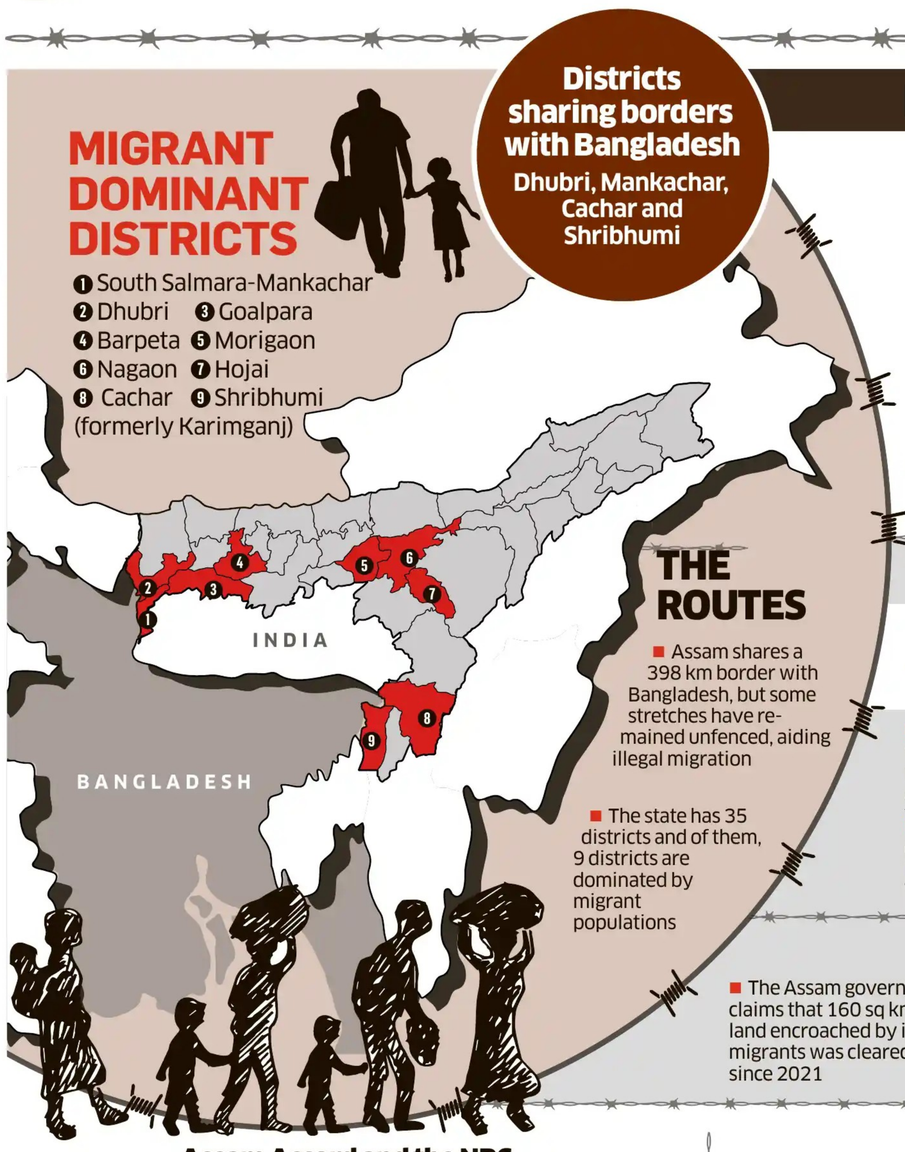
CM Sarma has said that the eviction drive would continue till all encroached land is cleared, even after the elections slated in March-April next year.

The Badruddin Ajmal-led All India United Democratic Front and the Opposition Congress, however, have alleged that Muslims are being singled out by the government.

The BJP and its allies, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), have already set a target of securing a third consecutive term in Assam.

The AGP, formed in 1985 after the six-year-long anti-foreigners movement known as the Assam Agitation (1979-1985), was led by former All Assam Students' Union (AASU) chief Prafulla Kumar Mahanta.

"The evictions are aimed at diverting attention from the failures and corruption of the BJP government ahead of elections," said Debabrata Saikia, Congress MLA and leader of the Opposition in the Assam Assembly.



MIGRATION CONUNDRUM

- Migration to Assam began with the British encouraging large-scale shifting from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) to cultivate the fertile plains of the Brahmaputra valley
- Following the Partition in 1947 and the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, Assam saw the migration of refugees fleeing religious persecution
- This sparked fear among Assamese about losing their indigeneity and gave rise to major political movements such as the Assam Agitation which culminated in the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985
- In recent days, the issue of migrants intensified with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise and the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)

THE CASE OF 'D' VOTERS

'D' voters (or doubtful voters) are individuals who could not prove their Indian nationality and were disenfranchised by the Election Commission (EC). They were tagged in 1997 based on an EC report.

- Since then, the 'D' voters have been barred from casting votes in Assam
- Cases of foreigners or 'D' voters are initiated in the Foreigners Tribunal (FT)
- Between 1997 and 2023, as many as 89,400 'D' voters were removed from electoral rolls
- Currently, Assam has 96,987 'D' voters

EVICTION DRIVES

- The Assam government claims that 160 sq km land encroached by illegal migrants was cleared since 2021
- In 2025, eviction drives were taken up in Goalpara, Dhubri, Nalbari, Lakhimpur, Golaghat, Nagaon districts
- Since 2016, seven people lost lives in police firing during eviction clashes

Assam Accord and the NRC

- The Assam Accord was signed in 1985 following a six-year anti-foreigners movement
- The accord promised to detect foreigners with March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for deportation
- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) was updated as per the Assam Accord but it still remains incomplete
- Over 19.06 lakh applicants were kept out of the draft NRC (between 2013-2018) as they failed to prove their Indian citizenship prior to cut-off date
- Over Rs 1,600 cr was spent for the NRC exercise

REFORM or POLITICS?

- Since 2021, over 1,200 government-run Madrassas were closed, converted into schools
- Sale and consumption of beef banned in hotels, guest houses
- Over 4,000 people, mainly Muslims, were arrested as part of crackdown on child marriage
- Bill was passed for repealing Assam Moselem Marriage and Divorces Act 1935. Another bill was passed for to stop under-age marriage
- Plans to prohibit inter-religious transfer of land without police scrutiny; regulate inter-religious marriages
- Aadhar enrollment for adults were stopped citing illegal immigration concerns

HOW ARE ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IDENTIFIED?

A suspected illegal immigrant must produce documents to prove that their forefathers lived in Assam on or before March 24, 1971. The date was decided only for Assam as per the Assam Accord of 1985 and was upheld by the Supreme Court in October 2024

Cases of suspected foreigners (post-1971 migrants) are tried in the Foreigners Tribunals, a quasi-judicial body

In case the accused fails to prove his residency, he or she is declared a foreigner by the tribunals. The person is sent to the detention centre but can challenge the FT order in the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Recently, the state government approved a SoP empowering district commissioners and additional district commissioners to decide a case of illegal migration within 10 days. The 'illegal migrant' would be 'evacuated' to a "holding centre" for pushback by the BSF.

Source: International Journal of Political Science and Governance, MHA annual report 2022-23, Information tabled in Assam Assembly, CDPP, eILP, media reports)

Compiled by Divyashri Mudakavi and Sumir Karmakar

DH Infographics: RAMU MASTAIAH

Foreigners in India and Assam

2.2 cr
Bangladeshi migrants are in India, as of 2016

50L
illegal migrants were in Assam in 1998

1.6L
people were declared foreigners by Foreigner Tribunals between 1980s and 2023

3,100
people were deported between 2001 and 2023

96,149
cases are currently pending in Foreigner Tribunals

400
Bangladeshis were deported from India in 2025. This includes those declared as foreigners by FTs and those found illegally entering India from Bangladesh

CAA complications

The long-debated 'foreigners' issue in Assam was to be resolved with March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date, as enshrined in the Assam Accord of 1985. This was agreed upon as a compromise: Those who entered Assam before it would be considered legal residents, while those arriving afterwards would be subject to detection and deportation.

However, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), passed by the Union government in 2019, gave a fresh and contentious twist to the debate. The legislation sparked massive protests across Assam, with five people even losing their lives.

The CAA altered the framework for detecting and deporting post-1971 migrants by offering Indian citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan who had arrived before 2014, citing 'religious persecution'.

This provision angered the AASU and several indigenous groups, who argued that the law violated the very spirit of the Assam Accord.

"Our stand is very clear: All post-1971 migrants must be detected and deported, irrespective of religion. By signing the Assam Accord, Assam accepted immigrants who entered India till 1971. We cannot take more burden," AASU president Utpal Sarma told *DH* in Guwahati.

CM Sarma recently said that three Hindu Bengalis have been given Indian citizenship under the CAA, out of 12 applications so far. "Hindu Bengalis in Assam migrated prior to 1971, and so they do not want to go through the CAA," Sarma said. AASU and a few other organisations, however, have rejected the CM's claim.

With the CAA law providing a pathway to Hindu Bengalis, the Bengali-speaking Muslims could now be the target for the 'fight against foreigners'. PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, during their recent visit to Assam, also endorsed the evictions, saying 'infiltrators' posed a threat to the demography of several districts in Assam.

Playing with emotions

According to Manoj Kumar Nath, a veteran Assamese journalist and author, all parties have often played on emotions surrounding Assam's long-standing anti-immigration issue for political gain. "As Assamese voters get emotional over the foreigners issue, parties play politics by highlighting the threats posed by immigrants or promising to solve the problem. People elected the AGP government led by Prafulla Kumar Mahanta twice, seeing it as their own government. But the Mahanta government merely blamed the Centre for failing to implement the Assam Accord," Nath, author of the Assamese book Asom Andolan, told *DH*.

"The parties simply harp on emotions to divert attention from developmental issues," Nath said. "As politicians have kept the problem alive, Assam faces humanitarian situations like the one created by the ongoing evictions."

Nath added that the only sustainable solution to the decades-long foreigners problem lies in implementing the Assam Accord in its entirety.

In May this year, the BJP government's drive against 'illegal migrants' took a different turn, with several 'declared foreigners' reportedly being sent back to Bangladesh. CM Sarma also stated that others attempting to enter the state were stopped at the border and pushed back.

Prasenjit Biswas, a professor at North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, said Assam's anti-immigrant movement raises serious human rights challenges for both Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims.

"Human rights are being bypassed by the rule of order over the rule of law. Enforced statelessness, decitizenisation of many bona fide citizens based on suspicion and the fiat of documentation without proper constitutional safeguards is weakening civil and political rights," he said.

"The constitutional mechanisms to resolve the foreigners issue are no longer relied upon, leading to tragedies, impunity, and a lack of transparency in the processes adopted," Biswas added.

The Assam government carried out a tree plantation drive at the site of eviction at the Paikan forest reserve. DH PHOTO/ SUBHAMOY BHATTACHARJEE

'All post-1971 migrants must be deported'

Since 1979, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) has been campaigning against illegal migration from neighbouring Bangladesh to Assam. In conversation with *DH*'s **Sumir Karmakar,** AASU president Utpal Sarma speaks on NRC, CAA and the ongoing eviction drives in Assam. Excerpts:

Illegal immigration persists even 40 years after the Assam Accord was signed in 1985...

The Assam Accord promised that those who migrated till March 24, 1971 would get Indian citizenship and those who came later would be deported. This was a national commitment, yet successive governments in Delhi or Dispur failed to implement it. Instead, they have used the issue as a poll plank. Today, the problem has become more complex.

The NRC was updated as per the Assam Accord. Why was it not accepted?

The backdrop in the case of NRC in Assam was different from the rest of the country. The Assamese people are opposed to the CAA but want the NRC.

In the first draft of the NRC, over 40 lakh people were kept out, but in the final draft, it was about 19 lakh. Many indigenous people were left out while lakhs of Bangladeshis made it to the list.

AASU, along with Assam Public Works, an NGO, moved the Supreme Court seeking a complete re-verification of the NRC draft due to data discrepancies in the number of Bangladeshi immigrants reported by the government.

The Supreme Court disposed of the petitions in November 2024, while upholding the cut-off date of March 24, 1971. The Assam government only voiced displeasure in the media but didn't challenge the NRC legally. So, we decided to move the Supreme Court again, seeking verification of the NRC. If the NRC is not error-free, the indigenous people are bound to become minorities in their own land in the coming decade.

Did the CAA and the recent notification for the protection of non-Muslim migrants till 2024 complicate the issue further?

The CAA and the new order are both detrimental to the indigenous people of Assam and violate the Assam Accord. Unlike the rest of India, where CAA protests were about secularism and communal bias, Assam's case is about the violation of the Assam Accord. All post-1971 immigrants must be detected and deported, irrespective of religion, as per the Accord.

Do you believe that everyone being evicted is an illegal migrant?

No, and that is where the government must be careful. They cannot make blanket statements that all those being evicted are illegal migrants. The detection must start immediately. Those found to be illegal migrants must be detained and deported. But if they are legitimate citizens, the government must assess whether they are landless or have land in other areas and are occupying the government land unlawfully.

Have your say

To express your opinion, e-mail us at: insight@deccanherald.co.in

Teenage pregnancy, from Page 1

Declining teenage pregnancy rates conceal systemic failures

Studies show that in low and middle-income countries, the leading cause of mortality amongst adolescent girls is pregnancy and childbirth-related complications.

Considering young mothers are less likely to continue into higher education, there are worse socioeconomic outcomes in store for both teen mothers and their babies. Several studies have pointed out the basic correlating factors behind adolescent pregnancy: Low awareness, poverty and a lack of education are at the top.

According to NFHS data, as education levels increased, the risk of teen pregnancy significantly reduced. Women with no education had the highest prevalence of adolescent pregnancy (18%), compared to 4% among women with 12 or more years of schooling. Women from Scheduled Tribes also had a higher prevalence of adolescent pregnancies.

Care and protection

The occurrence of these cases at government residential schools makes the matter that much more alarming because the minors are from: 1) varying community backgrounds, with high levels of vulnerability, 2) away from home, and far from family and community support systems, 3) dependent on a school ecosystem where health and psychosocial support systems are barely functional. The last factor particularly evidences a violation of child protection policies, which mandate regular health check-ups and availability of support at residential facilities for children.

Government-run residential schools are mandated by the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS) to have staff nurses conduct health check-ups for students every 15 days.

A common thread among several cases is the discovery of the pregnancy at the time of birth. In the Yadgir case, other students heard the young girl go into labour in one of the bathrooms and reported it to the staff.

Consider the level of negligence it would take for teachers, support staff and medical professionals to miss health symptoms spanning nine months.

In one of the three cases reported recently, the young girl had only attended classes for 10 days every month since she became pregnant. Yet, there was neither notice nor intervention on the part of the care staff.

According to data provided by the social welfare department, reported by *DH*, as of February 2024, 41% of warden posts at residential schools remained unfilled. Nearly 65% of schools did not have permanent staff nurses. Teachers take turns as wardens instead.

Tragically, these cases are not limited to Karnataka. Government residential schools for SC and ST students in Odisha, for instance, have been reporting distressing numbers of student deaths, sexual abuse and teen pregnancies in recent years.

Social stigma

Considering the taboo nature of sexual health and pregnancy, teenagers in many contexts struggle to find open and safe spaces, even for conversation on the topics. Uncovering and accessing means of help becomes even more difficult due to this stigma.

High levels of community awareness, safe access to information and contraceptives, and strong cultural and psychosocial support systems are pivotal in teenage pregnancy prevention. This includes equipping parents, teachers, community leaders, ASHA workers, civil society staff, and local panchayat authorities to be vigilant, approachable and aware.

According to the United Nations Population Fund framework, ensuring teens are able to fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights includes: Age-appropriate sex education, safe and affordable contraceptive methods, sensitive counselling, and prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections. In cases of pregnancy, it is vital that we ensure young girls are able to feel safe in accessing prenatal care, safe abortions, judicial remedies and counselling. Addressing the high numbers of adolescent pregnancies involves building a community awareness and ethos that empowers teenagers and supports safe dialogue.

Policy efforts

In April 2024, in response to the alarming number of teenage pregnancies in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had issued a letter to seven departments. Speaking to similar incidents, the CM wrote that "hostels should be under strict CCTV surveillance and the health of girls should be monitored by organising checkups every month".

Over 18 months later, little seems to have changed. The recent slew of cases tossed up new and strikingly similar calls for a crackdown on child protection violations at the residential schools.

Responding to a question in the Legislative Assembly, Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar, said in August, that the government is pushing sex education, cyber safety and awareness of the POCSO Act in high schools.

Hebbalkar also pointed to the 'Akka Force' programme, which is a special patrol by women police officers and NCC cadets to monitor public spaces and help prevent child marriages and also "provide counselling" to vulnerable adolescents.

While the push for sex education and greater awareness is the way forward, some concerns arise with the vigilance and counselling functions described. In the midst of a call for education about sexual and reproductive health, there is a belief held by some policymakers and community support workers that greater exposure to information about sexual health promotes risky sexual behaviours at an early or adolescent stage.

This has been clinically disproven by several studies over the years. NFHS itself highlights that higher media exposure is associated with a lower risk of teenage pregnancy.

However, this looming hesitation towards sex education remains unaddressed. Including boys and men in the conversation is crucial as well. Regressive, victim-blaming attitudes regarding sexual abuse and the misconception that access to contraceptives would worsen sexual and reproductive health among adolescents are other key challenges.

Putting together programmes to address the systemic vulnerabilities behind adolescent pregnancy, therefore, requires tackling prejudice alongside addressing a lack of awareness. What does "counselling young couples" look like, and who is qualified to deliver this service? How are community support workers and police being equipped to understand and deliver information on sexual and reproductive rights? How are inherent social biases being checked? How is community misinformation being tackled? These are questions that must also take centre stage in teen pregnancy prevention, in order to ensure the rights of children are meaningfully protected.

Protesters unite for safer roads on Varthur stretch

Commuters say the situation has reached unbearable levels

Residents of all ages protest outside Prestige Lakeside Habitat, holding placards in a united call for safer roads.

SHRADDHA A K
BENGALURU, DHNS

Residents of several societies along Varthur Road gathered on Saturday morning to form a peaceful human chain, demanding immediate action to repair the dangerously damaged stretch between Gunjur and Varthur Kodi. The protest, organised in front of Prestige Lakeside Habitat, saw hundreds of residents, including children and senior citizens, standing united with placards calling for safer roads.

"The condition of this road is pathetic, with potholes everywhere. It is disheartening that one protester returning home even fell and got injured," said Ajith Kumar, a resident of Prestige Lakeside Habitat.

Daily commuters say the situation has reached unbearable levels. The two-kilometre stretch between Vinayak Nagara and Varthur Police Station, which should ideally take less than five minutes, now takes a minimum of 40 minutes to cross, regardless of the time of day. Residents point out that not only does this waste time, but it also increases the risk of accidents and health hazards due to dust and poor road quality.

Swetha Rangaswamy, a member of the Individual Taxpayers Forum, told *DH* that the protest was not a political move but a "cry for help." She added, "We pay taxes, so we are entitled to ask questions. The poor road conditions have made daily commuting unsafe. Refund the taxes we have paid, and we will maintain the roads ourselves."

Protesters ensured the demonstration remained peaceful and non-disruptive to traffic, focusing solely on drawing attention to the urgency of the problem. The united effort of societies along the route sent a strong message to authorities: the community will no longer remain silent about crumbling infrastructure and unsafe roads.

The protest came in response to the Deputy Chief Minister's dismissal of letters and pleas from residents, which he referred to as a political move. "Whenever we try to raise awareness on public forums, it's called politics. Even when the children write letters about their struggles due to the potholes near their school, it is termed politics," a resident told *DH*.

Residents argue that if they pay taxes, they are entitled to ask why roads aren't being maintained. "We will crowdfund and manage to rebuild our area ourselves. Just refund our tax, and we have capable people here," Swetha said.

Due to the poor quality of roadwork, repairs often need to be redone soon after. Residents call this "losing money at the cost of lives" because the roads go from bad to worse.

"Even if they fix the potholes on Vibgyor High School Road or in nearby areas, the quality of construction would not be great—especially considering heavy vehicle movement on this road. These patches will come out in about six months. Either they stop heavy vehicle movement or lay cemented/strong tar roads," added Prerit Malpani, also a resident.

K. Parashurama, DCP Whitefield, spoke about the protest, saying, "In Bengaluru, you are not allowed to carry out a protest in any place other than Freedom Park, so we did not give them permission to carry this one out. However, the welfare committee was very cooperative." The protest remained peaceful and took place inside the premises of the apartment complex.

3-year delay in bridge work adds to daily traffic woes

BENGALURU, DHNS: It takes close to half an hour just to cover less than a one-kilometre stretch near Varthur Kodi in Muthasandra. While one side of the bridge is ready, work on the second bridge — heading towards the Varthur police station — has been abandoned for the past three years. At times, motorists have even run out of fuel as traffic on the Varthur–Gunjur Road becomes unimaginably worse during office hours.

The delay, despite the urgency of easing traffic on the road, persists even after Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh inspected the stretch about five months ago. The stretch is a critical link between numerous office spaces and high-rise residential buildings.

"I end up using this road in the evening as there are no alternative routes to reach my home. The stretch between the gas station and the police station turns into a parking lot almost daily. Yet people like me continue to use it because Balagere Road is worse than this," said Mithun Gangadhar, a local resident.

About three years ago, the now-dissolved BBMP had completed one side of the bridge, but the other portion remains unfinished. In the past, the civic body reportedly floated two tenders, but no bidders came forward.

Estimated to cost about Rs 20 crore, the Palike floated the tenders again after Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh inspected the Varthur–Gunjur Road in April 2025 and issued instructions to complete all pending projects. A senior BBMP official said they have completed all the tender formalities and it is now awaiting government approval.

While the bridge could help ease congestion to some extent, residents have been helplessly waiting for the Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited (KRDCL) to complete the flyover and widen the road. KRDCL is yet to complete the acquisition of properties, even though engineers have started minor civic works along the stretch.

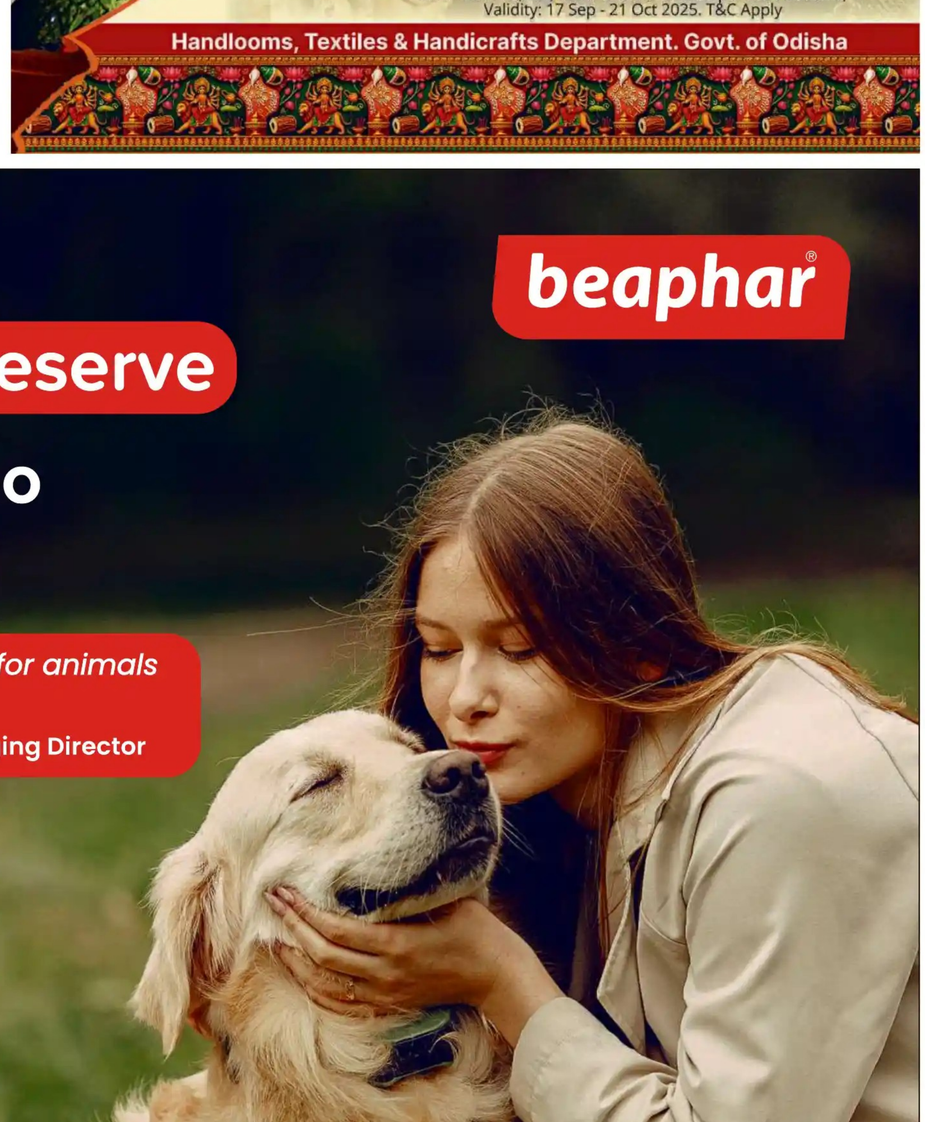
Clement Jayakumar, a member of the Mahadevapura Task Force, said the government must provide a comprehensive approach to the issues faced by people in the Varthur, Gunjur, and Sarjapur areas. "Just a small bridge project has been pending for two and a half years. The East Airport Corridor has been delayed. There is no effort to ensure full completion of the 150-foot-wide road linking Varthur Road and the Outer Ring Road," he said.

One more arrest made by forest department

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Forest Department has arrested another accused in connection with the wildlife crime case (No. 04/2025-26) dated June 29, 2025, related to the killing of a large number of spotted deer registered in the Kaggalipur Forest Range. The arrested accused is Dominic Raj, a resident of Krishnadoddi village, Jigani hobli, Anekal taluk. So far, four accused have been arrested in this case, and the Forest Department has intensified the investigation.

The probe is being carried out under the leadership of the Assistant Conservator of Forests, Bangalore South.

The case is being investigated, and call detail records (CDR) have helped trace the movements of the accused.



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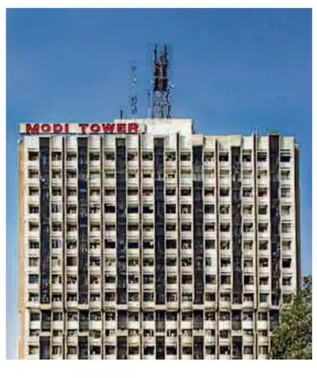

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WILD CARGO Over 10,000 animals seized at Kempegowda International Airport this year

When iguanas, cuscus, snakes are smuggled into Bengaluru

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has recorded around 25 wildlife smuggling cases till August, with May registering the highest—six incidents involving a total of 6,344 animals, including red-eared slider turtles, snakes, spotted cuscus, opossums, African spurred tortoises, and blue iguanas.

Customs officials at the airport and the Forest Department are currently working together to address the growing issue, after noticing an increase in cases since 2023, officials from both departments said. In the most recent case, on September 18, customs seized a water monitor lizard, an emerald tree monitor, a common spotted cuscus, and fig parrots, all being illegally imported from Thailand.

Overall, wildlife smuggled into the city is higher compared to that smuggled out of the city. Some of the recently smuggled species include wreathed hornbills, red-eared slider turtles, spotted cuscus, douc langurs, and gibbons. So far in 2025, the smuggling of over 10,000 wildlife specimens has been recorded at KIA.

In August, customs officials caught a woman travelling from Bangkok to Bengaluru with three gibbons hidden in her check-in luggage; the animals were found dead due to suffocation. In the same month, a man was intercepted while attempting to smuggle around 890 Indian star tortoises on a flight to Malaysia.

What's on the smuggling list?

Some of the wildlife most commonly smuggled into the city include birds like wreathed hornbills, great-billed parrots, and hanging parrots; reptiles like bearded dragons, blue and green iguanas, and various kinds of snakes, tortoises, and turtles; and mammals like silver and white-bearded gibbons. Wildlife smuggled out of Bengaluru often includes the Indian star tortoise and a few snake species.

Smugglers often use innovative tactics to hide the live animals, such as stuffing smaller animals in cereal boxes and in between diapers, or disguising larger animals among soft toys.

While wildlife that is illegally imported is immediately sent back to the country of origin once a case is booked against the accused, local wildlife is released within designated forest limits by the Forest Department.

Security issues

While the baggage scanners used for security checks at the airport are capable of detecting even the most minute irregularities, live or dead animals pose a challenge, said a senior customs official at KIA.

"These animals show up just like any other organic material. If there is a bigger animal, you'll be able to see the spine, but that's not possible with small animals. It takes a trained eye to detect the wildlife, based on minute movements. This is one of the reasons why the wildlife goes undetected. But we're able to track and intercept such smuggling cases," he elaborated.

While most documented cases of illegally imported wildlife originate from Southeast Asia, Thailand has been involved in the highest number of cases. A few cases from Singapore have also been reported.

"While the security at Indian airports is under the direct control of the Government of India, I've been informed that it is not the same in Thailand. Some parts of the security process have been outsourced to private companies. Comparatively, Malaysia is more proactive and strict with its security efforts," he pointed out.

In an attempt to tighten security, airport authorities recently reached out to specific Southeast Asian airlines. "It was noted that a few specific airlines have been involved in the illegal import of wildlife. So, we reached out to them and have given a warning that if security measures are not taken from their end, action will be taken," a source in the know told *DH*. As per the data provided by the Customs Department, the airlines commonly involved in recent wildlife smuggling operations include Thai Airways, Malaysia Airlines, IndiGo, and Thai AirAsia.

Jurisdictional dilemma

Most cases of wildlife smuggling at KIA have involved carriers from outside the state, mostly Tamil Nadu, said Santosh Kumar G, Deputy Conservator of Forests.

"They're part of a wider smuggling network, which operates from various points outside the state. So tracking the network becomes difficult due to jurisdictional boundaries. The smugglers smartly use this hindrance to their benefit," he said.

As a result, while the Customs Department has been empowered to track down smugglers on the airport premises, it is unable to investigate the cases further. "To overcome this, we're collaborating with the Customs Department to further investigate and track down the smuggling racket. We have gotten a few leads through the last few cases," he told *DH*.

"We're working towards bringing in stricter measures to curb such crimes. Instead of booking a case and waiting for the investigation to complete, we're working with customs officials to impound the passports of the accused once caught," he added.

Focusing on the way forward, social rights activist Mansoor Chetlu believes an interdepartmental body needs to be set up to look into the wildlife smuggling racket.

Earlier this year, on May 12, Mansoor filed a complaint with the Director General and Inspector General of Police seeking immediate action against the ongoing wildlife smuggling operations at the airport. However, he is yet to receive a response from the police, he told *DH*.

"In addition to protecting the wildlife, there is also a major concern for human safety here. Earlier this year, a person carried nine venomous snakes in their carry-on while travelling from Bangkok to Bengaluru. If these snakes had escaped, it would have led to a major disaster. This was a major security lapse. There needs to be a committed body to look into these issues," he said.

The Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) refused to comment on the topic.

Zomato agent attacked over food delay, two held

BENGALURU, DHNS

Two individuals have been arrested by the Byatarayanapura police for allegedly assaulting a Zomato delivery agent over a delay in delivering a food order on Thursday night.

The victim, Chand Patel, was attacked by two residents of Shyamanna Garden, Mubarak and his friend Adil Hussain, at around 8 pm. According to the police, the attack was prompted by a trivial reason—the food delivery being late.

Based on a complaint from the victim, the Byatarayanapura police have registered a case and arrested the two accused, Mubarak (24) and Adil Hussain (22). The charges have been filed under BNS sections related to assault.

The police stated that further action is being taken in the case.

Five booked for harassing guest lecturer

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Jnanabharathi police have registered a case against five people for allegedly harassing a guest lecturer at Bangalore University.

Based on a complaint by the 30-year-old victim, the police on September 8 booked Swaroop Kumar, Ramanjaneya B K, Rangaswamy, Jagannatha K., and Shivaray, who were allegedly her colleagues.

She alleged that Kumar and Ramanjaneya mentally harassed her and caused her to lose her job by spreading false information about her. She further stated that she once snatched Kumar's phone while he was recording her on video and discovered a clip in which he and the other suspects were discussing sexually exploiting her, the FIR noted.

When she confronted them, they allegedly abused her and said she had no right to question them since she was from a village. The FIR also stated that they demanded sexual favours to allow her to continue in the job, threatening to force themselves on her and kill her if she refused. The case has been transferred to the Ijoor police station in Bengaluru South district, as the offence occurred under its jurisdiction, a senior officer told *DH*.

Man arrested for murdering father

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bagalagunte police arrested a private firm employee who, along with his friend, killed the latter's father and tried to pass it off as a death by suicide.

An autopsy revealed that the death was due to strangulation, leading police to arrest Praveen Reddy, the friend of the prime suspect Manoj, who is still at large.

Investigations showed that on September 3, Manoj, a class 10 dropout and unemployed, called his mother—who was out with her younger son—and told her that his father, Manjunath, a carpenter from Dasarahalli, had died by suicide.

Once police confirmed during the autopsy that Manjunath had been murdered, they found that he used to scold Manoj for not working and keeping bad company. Manoj, however, was eyeing the ancestral property. He roped in his friend Reddy, and together they attacked and strangled Manjunath to death, staging it as suicide.

A further probe is underway, police said.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

'Dadabhai Naoroji's Bicentennial' Lecture and Discussion: Raghunath Krishnamachar, Sudhindra Budhy, K Satyanarayan to be present; Shivarama Karanth Vedike, RT Nagar; Taralabalu Mini Hall, Taralabalu Centre, RT Nagar; 4 pm

'Organic Santhe': Uday Shankar, Megha to be present; The Green Path, Malleshwaram; 10 am

CULTURAL

Yuva Dasara-2025: Street Festival: Yuvaka Sangha; 10th Main, 4th Block, Jayanagar Shopping Complex; 10:30 am

Badagutittu Pauranic Yakshotsava: Sripada Hegde, Sudhindra Bharadwaj to be present; 'Sarthak Sadak' Award recipient: Manjunath Prabhu;Yakshasinchana Trust Bangalore; BP Wadia Hall, The Indian Institute of World Culture, BP Wadia Road, Basavanagudi; 3 pm

'Sooriyaputhran' Play: Lasyakala Kshethra; Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte; 7 pm

'Kacha Devayani' Talemaddale: Nirman Yaksha Balaga; Sriramashrama, Girinagar; 3 pm

Karnataka Classical Music: Vocal: M Deepika, M Dhanyashree; Violin: Abhay Sampige Thaya; Mridangam: H Praveen; Venkatesh Sangeetha Sabha Trust; Chikkalasandra; 5:30 pm

RELIGIOUS

Special Lecture: Krishnaraman; Satyasai Ashrama, Brindavan, Kadugodi; 4 pm

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	27.6°C
Minimum	20.9°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	88%
Sunset (Sept 21)	6:18 pm
Sunrise (Sept 22)	6:09 am
Moonrise	4:46 am
Moonset	5:23 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Police nab four for threatening public with weapons

BENGALURU, DHNS: Four people have been arrested by the Chandra Layout police for allegedly brandishing weapons and threatening the public, officials said on Saturday.

The arrested are Arun S (19) from Kamakshipalya, Prajwal (18) from Kengunte, Ravi (19) from Moodalapalya, and Dileep M alias Daali (20) from Kamakshipalya. Two others were minors, police said.

According to the police, around 2 am on September 13, the six suspects roamed the streets on three two-wheelers, waving weapons in public. They first damaged three parked cars near Byraveshwara Nagar before attempting to attack a passerby.

On September 18, the six suspects were arrested, and police recovered two weapons and impounded the three vehicles. They were booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

On September 19, all 11 divisions of the Bengaluru police, along with the Central Crime Branch (CCB), launched simultaneous raids on rowdy elements in the city. A total of 124 cases were registered after 1,478 suspects were searched. Senior officers, including the respective Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs), led the operations.

During one such search at the West View Bar and Restaurant, Ravish M, 38, a police sub-inspector, and Siddappa Gowda, 28, a police constable, were assaulted by two people after they objected to being checked.

Of the 165 rowdies searched, police found seven with pending warrants. Police also registered 10 cases against those who tested positive for drug consumption in spot tests.

Tunnel project under scrutiny as experts doubt viability

Activists urge funds be diverted to public transport

BENGALURU, DHNS

The State government's proposed Rs 17,698-crore twin-tunnel project, aimed at easing traffic congestion between Hebbal and Silk Board, is facing sharp criticism from urban mobility experts.

A panel discussion titled Beyond the Tunnel, held on Saturday, featured Prof. Ashish Verma of the IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab and Shaheen Shasa of the Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike. Both raised serious concerns about the project's efficacy and environmental impact.

Prof Verma presented a study based on macro-simulation models, revealing that the tunnel would be severely underutilised. The study's scenarios, which included a high-toll model, showed that the tunnel would primarily cater to a very small segment of affluent car owners, with a projected volume-to-capacity ratio as low as 0.1, indicating vast oversupply. Even in a no-toll scenario, utilisation remains low, as only a small percentage of daily commuters use cars. His findings also projected that the tunnel would not significantly alleviate congestion on the existing Outer Ring Road and could potentially increase overall emissions.

Prof. Ashish Verma, convener of the IISc Sustainable Transport Lab, shares insights on tunnel plan in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Shaheen Shasa backed the professor's study, highlighting the city's historical pattern of investing in expensive, car-centric infrastructure like flyovers and underpasses that have failed to solve congestion. She pointed out the stark disparity in investment, noting that bus transport capacity has remained stagnant for decades despite the city's population swelling to over 1.4 crore and the number of private vehicles exceeding one crore.

Shasa argued that the massive funds earmarked for the tunnel would be better spent on bolstering the public transport system, particularly the bus network, which is more economical, flexible, and serves a much larger portion of the population.

The discussion concluded that the tunnel project is a costly, inequitable, and unsustainable solution.

Woman held for posting misleading video on Facebook

BENGALURU, DHNS: Pulakeshinagar police arrested a woman for allegedly posting a misleading video on Facebook claiming that rowdies were running amok in Bengaluru.

Shahajahan

The FIR was registered on September 6 under Section 353(1)(b) (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The arrested suspect is Shahajahan, 36, from Konanakunte and a native of NR Pura in Chikkamagaluru.

Police filed the case suo motu after discovering that she had uploaded a two-year-old clip of an incident in Uttar Pradesh, passing it off as one from Bengaluru. The video, captioned "Rowdies running amok in Bengaluru", was viewed by lakhs of people, according to the FIR.

She was later traced and arrested. The suspect also issued a video apology following her arrest.

GBA chief directs officials to prepare masterplan to clean up K R Market

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner, Maheshwar Rao, has directed officials to prepare a master plan to clean up K R Market.

Rao, who inspected the market on Saturday, noted that approximately 70 tonnes of waste are generated daily and stressed the need for effective and scientific disposal of this waste.

To maintain cleanliness, he said every shop must mandatorily keep bins for waste disposal and that marshals should fine those who dispose of waste improperly. Marshals should also create awareness to ensure waste is disposed of only in designated locations, he added.

Officials inspect the KR Market on Saturday. DH PHOTO

Bengaluru Central Corporation Commissioner Rajendra Cholan observed that there was a lack of coordination among officials operating within the market and warned them not to shirk responsibility. He directed officers from all departments to work in coordination to ensure cleanliness.

In addition, Rao asked officials to take appropriate action to identify the total number of shops in the market and recover pending rents from defaulters.

Noting that damaged roof sheets were causing water leakage and affecting both traders and the public, Rao directed officials to carry out necessary repair works.

World Alzheimer's Day: Campaign on FTD today

BENGALURU, DHNS: On the occasion of World Alzheimer's Day on Sunday, Dementia India Alliance (DIA), in collaboration with the Cognitive Neurology Clinic (CNC), will host a free online public awareness campaign on Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD), the first of its kind in India.

The webinar, titled "What if it is FTD?", will be held from 11 am to 12.30 pm. The session will be led by Dr Ratnavalli Ellajosyula, Head of the Cognitive Neurology Clinic, and Jwala Narayanan, Lead Neuropsychologist at the clinic.

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ई–निविदा प्रसंग संख्या :– RCD/RAMGARH/ 905 /2025-26
दिनांक :– 19.09.2025

1.	कार्य का नाम	IRQP Work of Sikidri to Kulhi Road from KM 0.00 to 5.10 KM(Total Length- 5.100 KM) Under Road Divison, Ramgarh for the of Year 202 5-26
2.	प्राक्कलित राशि (रूपये में)	रुपये 4,28,00,000.00 (चार करोड़ अठाईस लाख) मात्र
3.	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि	04(चार) माह
4.	वेबसाईट पर निविदा प्रकाशित होने की तिथि एवं समय	27/09/2025 03:00 बजे अपराह्न
5.	निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	04/10/2025 12:00 बजे दिन तक
6.	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता	कार्यपालक अभियंता, पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, रामगढ़
7.	प्रोक्योरमेंट पदाधिकारी का सम्पर्क नंबर	98351–25637
8.	ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट सेल का हेल्प लाईन नंबर	0651–2403007

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No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 16/09/2025. The following *e-Tenders* can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in** Offers for such *e-Tender* can be submitted only electronically by accessing the above mentioned website → **login**. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or related information if any, Dy. CMM/M-II/CLW/ Chittaranjan, *Mobile no. 9163340708*. **Office address: Office of the PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan. Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No./GEM BID No.: GEM/2025/B/6686235. Brief Description of Item :** XLPE Cable for Working Voltages up to and including 1.1 KV as per IS 7098 (Part 1) (Q2) **(1) XLPE Cable for Working Voltages up to and including 1.1 KV as per IS 7098 (Part 1) (90000 meter). (2) XLPE Cable for Working Voltages up to and including 1.1 KV as per IS 7098 (Part 1) (78480 meter).** (As per GEM Bid No. GEM/2025/B/6686235 dt. 16.09.2025). **Qty.:168480 Meter. Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.):** Schedule 1 = ₹ 95,400.00, Schedule 2 = ₹ 1,72,660.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 08.10.2025** at 11:30:00.

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SOLAPUR DIVISION
E-TENDER NOTICE

The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, General, Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of The President of India invites online E-Tenders on Railways e-procurement website **www.ireps.gov.in** from reputed, experienced & licensed Electrical Contractors for the following works. **(1) Tender No.: SUR/L/T/2024/48R1. Name of Work: -** Electrical General Service Portion of work in connection with provision of High mast lighting at 6 Goods shed along lighting arrangement at track side at 5 Goods Shed located over Solapur Division (Reinvitation). **Estimated Cost**: ₹ 72,24,829.76. **Bid Security**: ₹ 1,44,500/-. **Completion Period:** 06 Months. **Validity of Offer:** 60 Days. **(2) Tender No.: SUR/L/T/2025/14. Name of Work**: - Electrical General Service Portion of work in connection with Construction of Railway Hospital at Kurduwadi station of Solapur Division. **Estimated Cost**: ₹ 24,96,155.16. **Bid Security:** ₹ 49,900/-. **Completion Period:** 12 Months. **Validity of Offer:** 60 Days. **(3) Tender No.: SUR/L/T/2025/15. Name of Work**: - Electrical General Service Portion of work in connection with 20 bedded RPF Barrack at Latur station of Solapur Division. **Estimated Cost**: ₹ 24,19,672.07. **Bid Security:** ₹ 48,400/-. **Completion Period:** 12 Months. **Validity of Offer:** 60 Days. **Date & Time of Tender Closing on Website: 13/10/2025** at **15.00 Hrs.** Bid Security cost shall be paid through e-payment on **www.ireps.gov.in** website.

Sr.DEE (G) Solapur

रेलवे फाटक को बंद स्थिति में पार करना मना है

SolSUR/68

GLOBAL GYAN AT LOCAL EASE Coveted degrees to cost less, post tie-up with foreign varsities

Ocean of opps for students without crossing the seas

RASHMI BELUR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Students from the state will soon get opportunities to access higher education in UK-based universities while staying put in Karnataka, as the state government is encouraging more foreign universities to establish their campuses in Karnataka, specially from the UK.

Liverpool University has already announced the setting up of its campus at KWIN City and also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for this purpose.

Encouraging 'internationalisation of higher education,' during their recent visit to UK, Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar and Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil proposed for more reputed universities based out of London to open their campuses in Karnataka.

As studying in the UK is considered expensive and financially not viable for all, the government has pitched several initiatives with UK-based universities for student exchange, twinning programmes and also to have campuses here.

Explaining this M C Sudhakar said, "We are pushing for more foreign universities to come, specially from UK to have their campuses in Karnataka, mainly to exempt our students from travelling all the way to UK. This will save them lots of money as the cost of living is less in Karnataka compared to cities in UK."

"When we provide the same degree from the same university, but in Karnataka, why will our students fly out?," the minister said.

Sudhakar said the foreign universities would get some benefits from Karnataka by setting up campuses here.

Fees for students from the state would be a bit less than what they normally charge for the same education in their home country.

"People may wonder why we have chosen UK. It is just because nothing was materialising with universities from other countries. Delegations from various countries including Australia, US and New Zealand, met us, but they did not taken anything forward. But the British Council showed lots of interest in collaborating with us. We have already launched the SCOUTS programme with them and requested them to increase numbers for Karnataka under Chevening Scholarship programme. Every discussion with UK universities is reaching a logical end. Two entities from UK have already established their presence in Bengaluru. Our focus is on more collaboration to help our students get degrees from them in our state," Sudhakar said.

"During the visit, we get to know about the opportunities available for our students. There are more job opportunities for nurses and even dentists. This will help us send our trained nurses and dentists to UK," he said.

A delegation from Karnataka was in the UK recently, for the signing of MoUs with universities there. Seen in the picture are Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar, Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, Dr Bhagawan B C, Vice Chancellor of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University Dr Jayakara S M, officials from UK universities and others.

Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil proposed that exams for membership to the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) be conducted in Karnataka. The minister has submitted the proposal for the same as medical graduates have to travel all the way to UK now for this exam.

It is the exam to enter specialist training for doctors in UK and it is a globally accepted exam.

"If MRCP exam is held in Karnataka, our medical graduates have no need to travel all the way to UK just to take this exam. Though many of them are interested in taking this exam, they are not opting for it, considering financial constraints of travel and stay there," said Patil.

PhD students of Bangalore University (BU) might get an opportunity to visit universities in the UK for a few months under a research students' exchange programme.

Vice Chancellor of BU Dr Jayakara S M had proposed this during the recent visit of a delegation of experts from Karnataka to UK universities.

Jayakara said there will be no financial burden on students.

"Our plan is to get sponsorship from the social welfare department for students who get selected for the student exchange programmes," he said.

"During our visit, we engaged in insightful and meaningful discussions with renowned universities including Cambridge University, Bangor University and Wolverhampton University. The focus of our interactions was to explore avenues for collaboration and knowledge exchange that would benefit both regions," said Dr Bhagawan B C, Vice Chancellor of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences.

HC directs rehabilitation of displaced slum dwellers near Mandya temple

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka High Court has directed the Mandya district administration to rehabilitate the displaced slum dwellers from the periphery of Kalikamba \ temple in Mandya city.

"It becomes necessary to observe that, if India has to endure as a nation of the first order, it cannot consign any of its citizens to a second-class existence. The dignity of slum dwellers is no less sacred than that of the devout. The rights of one cannot be secured by the suppression of the other. The Constitution of India knows no hierarchy of human worth; all are equal before its gaze," Justice M Nagaprasanna said while dismissing the petition filed by certain devotees and the review petition filed by the Kalikamba Temple Committee.

On May 11, 1979, a notification was issued declaring slum dwellers in Mandya city to be rehabilitated. One of the survey numbers was the area surrounding Sri Kalikamba Temple, then known as Kalikamba slum.

In 2003, the temple committee requested the relocation of 23 slum dwellers to houses constructed at a tank bed under the Ashraya Scheme. In a petition before the High Court, a settlement was entered into in 2013.

In 2018, a final notification was issued declaring 20 guntas of land in the area as a slum. At this stage, certain devotees moved the High Court. Subsequently, the temple committee filed a review petition seeking to revisit the 2013 settlement, arguing that the slum's proximity to the temple would affect the sanctity, serenity, and religious feelings of devotees, and violate Article 29 of the Constitution.

Justice Nagaprasanna noted that the temple committee, having consciously entered into a settlement, cannot now disavow the solemn statement.

"The contention proclaims that slum dwellers are lesser beings, bereft of the right to devotion, the right to shelter, and the right to dwell beside a place of worship. Such an assertion, in this enlightened age, is appalling. The notion that the divine aura of a temple could be diminished by the proximity of humble homes or sullied by the entry of a slum dweller bespeaks a mindset steeped in prejudice and exclusion. This court cannot but observe that such a stance is an attempt to rend society asunder along the lines of caste, class, or creed (sic)," he said.

The court further said, "Equality does not admit gradations of worth; it encompasses the entirety of our citizenry. The sanctity of a temple is not so fragile as to be endangered by the presence of the creator's children who, by accident of circumstance, live modestly beside it. To suggest otherwise is to deny the very universality that our Constitution professes."

SIT probes financial links in Dharmasthala case

MANGALURU, DHNS

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the mass burial case in Dharmasthala, has questioned several individuals linked to financial transactions related to the case.

The SIT sources told *DH*, "Monetary dealings have now emerged as the central focus of the probe. Investigators revealed that multiple people had deposited money into the accounts of the complainant-witness as well as other suspects, raising suspicions about a wider network."

The officers indicated that the financial trail could play a crucial role in identifying other persons connected to the case.

Meanwhile, a group of locals, led by K C Chandran of Dharmasthala, submitted a petition to the SIT expressing doubts over the death of Sowjanya's father.

They alleged that false accusations were being made against three men in connection with the Sowjanya murder case and urged investigators to bring out the truth.

At the same time, the Kolar District Janapara Vedike lodged a complaint demanding action against Mahesh Shetty Thimarody and others.

K C Chandran, a resident of Dharmasthala, along with four people, approached the SIT office with a petition signed by 25 individuals.

He said, "Several people allege that Sowjanya's father was murdered by slow poisoning, which should be probed."

Separately, Venkatachalapathi, Nagaraj, and Ramesh Babu of the Kolar District Janapara Vedike submitted a complaint to SIT, as well as to the Chief Secretary and Governor through the Belthangady tahsildar.

In the complaint, they alleged: "Mahesh Shetty Thimarody, Girish Mattannavar, Vittal, YouTuber Sameer, activist Jayanth and others are spreading false propaganda against Dharmasthala Kshetra. Cases should be registered against them under KCOCA Act. There is also a possibility that they are receiving funds from abroad, which must be probed."

The SIT sources said, "The SIT has been receiving several petitions daily, with some calling for investigations into multiple unnatural deaths reported in the area. Complainants allege that several of these deaths have remained unresolved for years."

Officials, however, clarified that no decision has yet been made on whether the SIT will expand the current probe to include these cases.

"At present, our focus remains on the ongoing probe. We are yet to decide whether or not to take up other complaints," the source added. Meanwhile, activist Girish Mattannavar posted an alleged video on Instagram showing the complainant-witness in conversation with Mahesh Shetty Thimarody.

In the post, he said the complainant-witness and his wife had met Thimarody two years ago and held discussions.

"In August 2023, he came to Thimarody in Ujire and revealed the dark incidents he had seen and experienced in Dharmasthala. In July this year, he fearlessly repeated almost same details in court. But now, while SIT is investigating to bring out the truth, he has changed his statement. What is the reason for this? Was he threatened or was he lured with inducements?" he asked in the post.

Forest minister asks dept to train staff to rescue snakes

DH IMPACT

HUBBALLI, DHNS

Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar Khandre has issued instructions to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) (PCCF) to ensure that all the forest ranges in the State have at least four to five trained forest staff to rescue snakes.

In a note issued to the PCCF, the minister stated that the department should provide training to interested field staff in rescuing snakes.

The order comes against the backdrop of *DH*'s recent report of how forest officials of Bhadravathi had to wait for a private snake handler to rescue three Indian Rock Pythons and two cobras that were illegally confined at the house of a self-proclaimed snake rescuer, Mohammad Irfan.

Irfan had taped the captured snakes and kept them in plastic bags.

Bhadravathi Deputy Conservator of Forests Ravindra Kumar said that they had to wait for a private snake handler, as his ground staff were not well-versed in handling snakes.

A similar situation is prevalent across the State and has resulted in several self-proclaimed snake handlers misusing the opportunity, even turning snake rescue into a business model.

The minister also instructed the PCCF to ensure that, henceforth, even the handling of King Cobra, a Schedule-I species protected under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, by private handlers in the Malnad region should be done only in the presence of the Forest Department and with approval from the department.

Recently, the forest officials arrested two natives of Maharashtra, who were trying to illegally transport a King Cobra, captured in Kodagu, to Maharashtra so that the snake could be used for captive photography.

"While rescue of King Cobras from houses and agriculture fields should be done by forest staff itself, in case of non-availability of staff, the private registered snake handlers should rescue only after getting approval and in the presence of senior forest officials," the minister's note said.

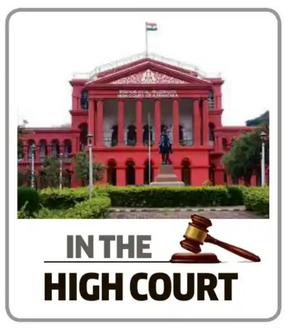
Hospital licence process to be simplified

SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS: Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil said here on Saturday that his department would try to simplify process of getting licences for new hospitals. They have to be obtained from 52 departments at present.

HC refuses to regularise illegal PG med admissions

Court directs for action against two colleges

BENGALURU, DHNS



The High Court has refused to regularise illegal admissions of four postgraduate medical students and directed the National Medical Commission (NMC) to take appropriate action against the said colleges: Kanachur Institute of Medical Sciences, Mangaluru and KVG Medical College and Hospital, Sullia.

A division bench, comprising Justices D K Singh and Venkatesh Naik T, said that the admissions of four postgraduate students are illegal and the medical colleges have to be punished accordingly.

The petitions were filed by the students: Tisa Robinson (Thrissur, Kerala) for Pathology, Ashish Appasaheb Patil (Kolhapur, Maharashtra) for Radiology, and Hemanth Kumar P (Thiruvalla, Kerala) for Orthopaedic course, who were admitted by the Kanachur Institute.

Nishanth G V from Bengaluru was admitted for Orthopaedic course by the KVG College.

The students challenged the March 11, 2024 communication by the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), stating that the admissions were not in terms of the guidelines of the Postgraduate Medical Education Regulation, 2023 (PGMER).

In response to the petitions, Kanachur Institute submitted that it had surrendered two seats, one each in Radiology and Orthopaedics, to the KEA.

It further said that since the KEA did not include the petitioners in the counselling, they were admitted. Insofar as the Pathology seat, the college contended that the admission was made against an unfilled seat.

On its part, KVG Medical College stated that the MS (Orthopaedics) seat was given to Nishanth, following the last-minute cancellation of admission by the student who was earlier admitted.

On the other hand, the counsel for the Department of Medical Education said Kanachur Institute submitted a letter on October 30, 2023, surrendering two seats, one in MS Orthopaedics and another MD Pathology.

However, the letter was withdrawn after the seal was affixed and hence, there was no surrender of the seats.

According to the counsel, the college has misled the court by falsely stating in the affidavit that it surrendered two seats.

The division bench noted that Kanachur Institute filed a false affidavit stating that it surrendered the two seats on October 30, 2023.

The court said that no admission to a postgraduate course by any medical college could be regularised, if it was not made through the counselling process.

The bench directed NMC to take appropriate action against the two colleges for illegally admitting the students to postgraduate medical courses.

Tentative schedule of SSLC, II PU exams released

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board has announced the tentative schedule for the annual exam 1 and 2 of 2025-26 for SSLC and II PUC students.

The II PUC Exam 1 will be held from Feb 28 to March 17, 2026, and Exam 2 from April 25 to May 9, 2026.

The SSLC annual Exam 1 is scheduled from March 18 to April 1, 2026, while Exam 2 will be held from May 18 to 25, 2026.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited
(A Joint Venture of GoI and GoK)
e-mail: helpdesk@bmrc.co.in, Website: www.bmrc.co.in

No. BMRCL/HR/0019/Land&SEMU/2025 Date: 20.09.2025

NOTIFICATION FOR CONTRACT APPOINTMENT/DEPUTATION

BMRCL invites applications from qualified and experienced officers (serving or retired) from Government departments for appointment to the following posts in the Project Wing. The appointment will be on Contract / Deputation basis.

Sl.No.	Name of the Post	No. of Posts
1	Tahsildar (Grade 1 / Grade 2)	03
2	Shirastedar	05
	Total	**08**

Last date for receipt of online application is **30.09.2025** and for receipt of signed application along with supporting documents is **4.00 pm on 06.10.2025**. For details regarding eligibility criteria, salary, application process and other information, please visit BMRCL website: **www.bmrc.co.in / career section.**

Sd/-
Dy. General Manager (HR)

MAHANAGARA PALIKE, KALABURAGI
Ph.: 08472/ 278675 Fax: 08472 / 260776 ಇ ಮೇಲ್– itstaff_ulb_gulbarga@yahoo.com

No: KMP/EE/TS-02/ 15th FC /Amrut 2.0/Jal hi Amrut/SFC C.A/ 2025-26 Date : 19.09.2025

KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: /2025-26

1) Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi invites 71 tenders as per KTPP Act, 1999 and Rules, 2000 through KPPP Portal 2.0 for works in KW- 1,2,3&4 Tender bid documents under 15th FC 2025-26, 15th FC 2024-25, 15th FC 2024-25 C.O.W, 2020-21 to 2022-23 Savings and 2023-24 & 2024-25 C.O.W, 2022-23, 2023-24 & 2024-25 Savings 15th FC, Jal hi Amrut, Reform Incentive (Component Under Amrut-2.0), Amrut 2.0 scheme & SFC Capital Asset 2025-26 Scheme for 15 Days Tender.

The bid documents can download from KPPP Portal website and any information related to these tenders will be updated on www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

2) Estimate Sanction cost: lowest amount Rs. 3.00 lakhs & Highest amount Rs. 200.00 lakhs. 3) EMD Value: Lowest Rs. 5,200.00 & Highest Rs. 2,55,000.00, 4) Contractor License: 2,3&4 Above, 4) Pre Bid Meeting date: 04.10.2025 upto 11-00 am., 4) Last date of Bid Submission: 04.10.2025 upto 4-30 pm., 5) Technical Bid Opening date: 06.10.2025 upto 4-35 pm., 6) Financial Bid Opening date: 07.10.2025 after 11:30 am., 7) Office Address : Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi. 8) For more details visit Office Website **http://www.kalaburagicity.mrc.gov.in/**

Note: All subsequent corrigendum/amendment shall be published only on website and not in press. Hence, tenderers are advoised to always be in touch with our said website until the tender is finally opened.

DIPR/Kalaburagi/530/KSMC&A/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi.

Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
#59, Richmond Road, (Gen. K S Thimmaiah Road) Bengaluru-25 Phone: 080-25584102/25594893
e-Mail: eecontractksphc@gmail.com | Website: www.ksphc.org

No.EE/KSPH&IDCL/CNT/TND/05/2025-26/169 Dated: 20.09.2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

KSPH & IDCL invites online tender as per KTPP 2000 Act & as per Standard Tender Document through KPPP **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** for the following works:

Sl No.	Name of Works	APT Amt. in Lakhs (Excl. GST)
1	Construction of 6-Bay SDRF 'F' Company Davanagere at Survey No.5 Gollarahalli Village in Davanagere District.	760.40
2	Construction of 3-Bay Fire Station at at Harohalli Industrial area in Ramanagar District under K-Safe-2.	213.74
3	Construction of 3-Bay Fire Station at Kadaba in Dakshina Kannada District under K-Safe-2.	217.22
4	Construction of 3-Bay Fire Station at Brahmavara in Udupi District under K-Safe-2.	217.24
5	Construction of 3-Bay Fire Station at Gurumitkal in Yadgir District under K-Safe-2.	217.09
6	Construction of Shivajinagar Traffic Police Station and Commercial street police station (Law & Order), Bengaluru.	113.15
7	Construction of Traffic Police Station-2 at Super Market in Kalaburagi.	59.97

Interested eligible Contractors may participate in the Tendering Process. The details such as Tender fee, EMD, Tender documents etc., are available on KPP Portal from 22.09.2025 onwards.

"KSPH & IDCL reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reasons."

Note: Henceforth any changes / modifications in the tender will be updated only on KPPP.

DIPR/CP/2920/CCL/2025-26

Sd/-
Executive Engineer-Contracts

No Brahmins in Christianity, Dinesh writes to BC commission

BENGALURU, DHNS: Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, the Brahmin face in the Congress government, has written to the backward classes commission flagging various anomalies concerning his community, including contentious nomenclatures such as "Brahmana Christian.".

In his letter to commission chairperson Madhusudhan R Naik, Dinesh stated that nomenclatures such as "Brahmana Christian" and "Vyasa Brahmana Christian" were not only immoral, but also illegal.

"A person who converts to Christianity loses the caste identity. The person also exits Hindu religion. There is no caste called Brahmana under Christianity," Dinesh stated. He also pointed out that the commission had given separate codes for "Brahmana", "Smartha Brahmana" and "Hoysala Karnataka". "A Hoysala Karnataka person will be a Smartha Brahmin and a Brahmin. Which code should this person choose?" he sought to know.

Christian castes: Governor warns of 'ramifications'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Providing caste identities under Christianity could result in "social disturbance, long-term complications and irreparable damage to the social fabric of the state," Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has warned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Gehlot said this in a letter to Siddaramaiah based on a representation the Raj Bhavan received from the opposition BJP on concerns over the upcoming Social and Educational Survey. The Governor referred to contentious nomenclatures like "Kuruba Christian."

"It is noticed that the use of such Christian identifiers and nomenclatures are not seen in any of the caste lists of the state and as per my knowledge, there is no such identities [sic] in the Christian religion," Gehlot stated.

"Hence, it is necessary to relook into the subject keeping in mind not to disturb the social structure and the long-term ramifications of such moves," he stated.

Separate religion effort to continue: Khandre

BENGALURU, DHNS: Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Saturday reiterated that Veerashaivas and Lingayats were the same, and that efforts would continue to secure a separate religion status for the "Veerashaiva-Lingayat" faith.

Khandre said that the All India Veerashaiva-Lingayat Mahasabha has asked all community members to identify their religion as "Veerashaiva-Lingayat" during the Social & Educational Survey.

"Since the government has not recognised this religion, we've left the decision to the conscience of our community members," Khandra, the secretary-general of the Mahasabha, said.

Reels with jumbos: Woman gets notice

MYSURU, DHNS: Forest officials have issued notice to a woman who had entered Dasara elephants' camp on the Mysuru Palace premises, without permission and had taken photos and recorded videos with them.

The woman had also uploaded the reels on social media. Officials are set to impose a fine on her. They have sought response from her within three days.

She reportedly entered the camp on the pretext of going to a temple on the premises, at around 7 pm on September 18, as per CCTV footage.

Castes look to identify selves in ways that don't 'dent' numbers

Consolidation name of game as power hinges on population

BENGALURU, DHNS

In numerical strength lies political power. In line with this doctrine, almost all major caste and community groups are making efforts to consolidate themselves for the Social & Educational Survey, starting on September 22.

The Congress government was forced to junk the previous 2015 Social & Educational Survey after various communities alleged that they were undercounted due to "unscientific" enumeration, especially while recording sub-castes.

This time, communities are going all out to create awareness amongst their members.

Communities hold meetings

The Veerashaiva-Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Muslims, Scheduled Castes, Brahmins, Kodavas and other communities have held meetings to decide how they should identify themselves during the survey in order to shore up their numbers.

By showing higher numbers, communities believe they can demand greater political representation.

CM's call to Kurubas

Even CM Siddaramaiah, on Saturday, asked his fellow Kurubas to identify themselves as only 'Kuruba' during the survey, without specifying sub-castes.

"Kurubas have many sub-castes - Kadu Kuruba, Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba, Halumata, Gonda Kuruba and so on. Don't write all that. Just write Kuruba," Siddaramaiah said at a Kurubara Sangha event in Gadag. As per the junked 2015 survey, there were 42.81 lakh Kurubas in the state.

The 'dominant' Veerashaiva-Lingayats and Vokkaligas have held meetings of their top leaders to decide how they should put up a united front during the survey.

The All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha has decided that its patrons must identify their religion as 'Veerashaiva-Lingayat' and caste as Veerashaiva, Lingayat or Veerashaiva-Lingayat. The Mahasabha believes there are not less than two crore Veerashaiva-Lingayats.

The community, however, is divided. One section wants to identify the religion as 'Hindu' while puritans say the name of their religion is just 'Lingayat,' without the word 'Veerashaiva'.

Reddy Lingayats (or Raddy Lingayats) have issued a public advertisement asking their communities members to consolidate. Non-Lingayat Reddys come under Category-3A with a 4% reservation. The Raddy Lingayats come under Category-3B with a 5% quota, the ad says.

Vokkaliga leaders, who say the community's population is about a crore, want to identify their caste as just 'Vokkaliga' so as to consolidate.

"No matter how many meetings are held, people will write what they want," Backward Classes Welfare Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi said.

"The backward classes commission will record whatever people say and send it to government. Then, government will take a call on what's right," he said.

The Akhila Karnataka Brahmana Mahasabha has said that community members need not specify their sub-caste. In a statement, Mahasabha president S Raghunath said community members should identify themselves as 'Hindu' in religion column and 'Brahmana' as caste.

US delivers H1-B visa fee jolt;...

H1-B visa, From Flap

Immigration attorneys and companies have asked the H-1B visa holders or their family members currently outside America for work or vacation to return within the next 24 hours or risk being stranded and denied entry into the US after the proclamation comes into effect from 12:01 am September 21.

Currently, the H-1B visa fee ranges from about $2,000 to $5,000, depending on employer size and other costs. The H-1B visas, which are very popular among Indian tech professionals, are valid for three years and can be renewed for another three years.

Trump's decision will significantly affect Indian technology professionals who are hired by tech companies and others on H-1B visas.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is the second-highest beneficiary with 5,505 approved H-1B visas in 2025, after Amazon (10,044 workers on H-1B visas), according to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

In his proclamation, Trump said the H-1B visa programme was created to bring temporary workers into the US to perform additive, high-skilled functions, but it has been deliberately exploited to replace, rather than supplement, American workers with lower-paid, lower-skilled labour.

Trump ordered that the Secretary of Homeland Security shall restrict decisions on petitions not accompanied by a $100,000 payment for H-1B speciality occupation workers, who are currently outside the US, for 12 months following the effective date of the proclamation, which is September 21, 2025.

The Secretary of State shall also issue guidance, as necessary and to the extent permitted by law, to prevent misuse of B visas by alien beneficiaries of approved H-1B petitions that have an employment start date beginning before October 1, 2026.

It said the restrictions shall not apply to any individual or those working for a company or in an industry, if it is determined that the hiring of such individuals to be employed as H-1B speciality occupation workers is in the national interest and does not pose a threat to the security or welfare of the US.

State forms SIT to probe Aland 'voter deletion' case

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka government on Saturday formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the Aland voter deletion case.

In an order, the Congress government appointed B K Singh, additional director general of police (ADGP), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), to lead the SIT.

Singh will be assisted by Saidulu Adavath, superintendent of police (SP), Cybercrime Division, CID, and Shubhanwita, SP, Special Inquiry Division, CID.

The order noted that the case registered in Aland police station in Kalaburagi on February 21, 2023, will be probed by the SIT along with any other fresh cases registered henceforth. So far, the CID was probing the case.

The SIT was further granted the status of a police station and directed to submit the final reports to the necessary courts.

The SIT will work under the supervision of M A Saleem, director general and inspector general of police (DG & IGP) and director general of police (DGP), CID (Special Units and Economic Offences).

The case gained steam after Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi earlier in the week accused Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar of refusing to share the necessary information to investigate the case and nab the culprits.

Gandhi had alleged that CID had written to the election commission 18 times seeking technical details but received no response.

Congress leader B R Patil won in 2023 from Aland against BJP's Subhash Guttedar by 10,348 votes.

The order appointing the SIT noted that attempts were made to delete 6,018 voters from the electoral rolls in Aland but only 24 voters were deleted. The rest 5,994 votes were not deleted as the applications were found incorrect.

BRIDGE GOES UNDER WATER

The bridge across River Bhima between Ganagapur and Itaga in Kalaburagi district is under water following heavy rains and discharge of water from the dams in Maharashtra. River Bhima is in spate and road connectivity between villages of Sindagi and Jewargi taluks has been snapped. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

Contract pourakarmika attempts to end life

DHARWAD, DHNS: A pourakarmika working on contract basis for Hubballi Dharwad Municipal Corporation HDMC, reportedly tried to end his life on Saturday.

Krishna Vajjannavar (35) attempted suicide by consuming pesticide, alleging that the contractor was not paying salaries properly and was giving less wages.

His colleagues rescued him and shifted to district hospital. Vidyagiri police have registered a complaint.

Survey:...

Survey, From PJ II

The pontiff said the exercise should not start until after "anomalies" are addressed.

"Caste names like 'Vokkaliga Christian', 'Brahmana Christian', 'Lingayat Christian'...even the Jain religion have been clubbed with our community," Nirmalanandanatha Swami said, referring to the list of castes prepared by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes. "If we keep (adding such nomenclatures), it is possible that some people will say they are 'Muslim Vokkaliga' or a 'Hindu-Muslim' or a 'Hindu-Christian,' the pontiff said.

The Vokkaliga leaders asked government to extend survey in view of Navaratri. "In the 15-day survey period, 10 days are Navaratri. Doing survey then will not yield the desired results," the pontiff said, adding families have planned holidays.

Ashoka told reporters the Vokkaligas would "take to the streets" if the government does not withdraw contentious nomenclatures.

Kumaraswamy quipped that survey report "may be worse than" the 2015 one. "All the pros and cons were discussed in the meeting. Shivakumar has taken responsibility for resolving all the issues," he said.

Tech firms' business continuity...

Tech firms', From Flap

"These companies also follow all necessary governance and compliance in the US for H-1B processes, pay the prevailing wages and contribute to the local economy and innovation partnerships with academia and startups. The H-1B workers for these companies by no means are a threat to national security in the US," Nasscom said.

The timeline for implementation (anyone entering the US after 12.01 am, September 21) is also a concern. A one-day deadline creates considerable uncertainty for businesses, professionals and students, it added. Microsoft, Meta and Amazon have asked employees to be back in the US before the deadline and not to travel outside the US.

While Infosys and TCS did not react so far to the visa fee hike, a Cognizant spokesperson said they are reviewing the proclamation to evaluate the potential implications. "Cognizant has established a resilient business model that creates flexibility to hire the best candidates for open roles, including robust local recruiting and hiring infrastructure," the spokesperson added.

Guruprasad Srinivasan, Executive Director and CEO, Quess Corp, a staffing firm, said Indians currently make up approximately 71% of all approved H-1B visa applications. "As on-site roles in the US become costlier, more work is likely to shift to India, creating greater opportunities and encouraging skilled professionals to build their careers at home, potentially reversing decades of brain drain," he said.

Experts said the visa fee hike may speed up offshoring. And that India will gain from a stronger workforce. Neeti Sharma, CEO, TeamLease Digital, said Indian IT companies will now have to rethink their H-1B strategy. "They will have reserved the "expensive" H1-B visas for super specialised skills for roles that can justify the $1,00,000. We will also see a higher push to hire local talent within America and at the same time they will look at building offshore capabilities along with higher valued skill sets. This will also accelerate their Agentic AI adoption, in order to reduce their overall workforce costs," Sharma added.

Kamal Karanth, Co-founder of Xpheno, a specialist staffing firm, said IT services companies may get more aggressive on GCC (Global capability centre) in the home front.

Meanwhile, former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said the fee will choke US innovation, and turbocharge India's. "By slamming the door on global talent, America pushes the next wave of labs, patents, innovation and startups to Bengaluru and Hyderabad, Pune and Gurgaon. India's finest doctors, engineers, scientists, innovators have an opportunity to contribute to India's growth & progress towards #ViksitBharat. America's loss will be India's gain," he said in a post on X.

Suchitra Film Society turns 55, film auteurs attend ceremony

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Suchitra Film Society, on Saturday, celebrated its 55th anniversary. It was attended by film auteurs Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Girish Kasaravalli.

To commemorate the occasion, the society screened Gopalakrishnan's 'Elippathayam' (The Rat Trap).

At the ceremony, Gopalakrishnan recalled how his films — Swayamvaram, Elippathayam — travelled across the globe and won many awards.

In his speech, Kasaravalli raised important questions about the dwindling state of cinema literacy in the country today.

"We don't see cinema as cinema. We only look at cinema as an extension of literature, especially in Karnataka. In India, we see cinema as an extension of theatre. Whereas in West, they always looked at it as an extension of visual art," he said, adding, "We need to inculcate this message that cinema is not extension of literature, it is an extension of visual expression".

Film personalities Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Girish Kasaravalli at the 55th anniversary celebrations of Suchitra Film Society in Bengaluru on Saturday. CREDIT: PHOTO BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kasaravalli also recalled how the then secretary Narahari Rao, who is the current president of Suchitra, did not allow him to attend the screening of a film.

"When I landed in Bengaluru after graduating from FTII, Suchitra at the time were holding the Nostalgia Film Festival. I wanted to attend the screening of a film at Bal Bhavan. Suchitra didn't have a screening space back then. When I went, the hall was already half full. I told Narahari Rao I wanted to watch the film. He asked me if I was a member. I said no. To which, he said I can't watch. When the film was just about to begin, he let me in," Kasaravalli recalled.

Suchitra Film Society began in 1971. The society's first president was B N Narayana, popularly known as Make-up Nani.

TTD plans Balaji temple in Belagavi

BENGALURU, PTI: The TTD board said it has approved the construction of a new temple in Belagavi, aimed at benefiting devotees from North Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra.

The announcement was made by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams board member S Naresh Kumar at a press conference held at Sri Venkateswara Temple in Malleswaram.

In a statement, the TTD said the resolution was passed at the board meeting on September 16.

"Like the temples already established in Bengaluru and other parts of the country, the Belagavi temple will bring Lord Venkateswara closer to devotees in this region. Instead of travelling to Tirumala each time, devotees will have the blessing of Swamy locally," Kumar said.

The temple is proposed near Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi and will be constructed through the Srivani Trust, he added.

TTD chairman B R Naidu is expected to visit Belagavi soon to review the site and oversee the next steps, Kumar said.

Neev literature festival 2025: A celebration of stories

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Neev Literature Festival (NLF) 2025, now in its ninth edition, kicked off on Saturday, drawing over 2,000 visitors to the Neev Academy campus in Yemalur. The festival, themed "Stories Make Us Human," is a free and open-to-all event designed to combat the digital distractions plaguing today's youth by reconnecting them with the joy of long-form reading.

The two-day festival features over 134 sessions with 80 delegates, including acclaimed international and Indian authors. Highlights from Saturday's events included sessions with literary figures like Sam Leith, Anthony McGowan, and Pablo Cartaya, who discussed topics ranging from the history of children's stories to the importance of writing narratives that help boys navigate emotions.

A man and his daughter are busy browsing through children's books at Neev Literature Festival in Bengaluru on Saturday.

A notable session, "The Noise Inside Boys," saw authors Anthony McGowan and Pablo Cartaya talk about how stories can help boys move beyond stereotypes. Another session with historian Devika Rangachari explored "stories that are undervalued and not read enough," particularly those of women rulers and their often erased contributions to history.

One of the most impactful moments came during a session with author Mamta Nainy, who used a interactive demonstration to teach young children about prejudice.

The festival's founder, Kavita Gupta Sabharwal, highlighted the critical mission behind the event. "The US and China markets are over 20 times larger than India's children's literature market, which is less than Rs 800 crore," she stated. Citing recent reports, she pointed out the literacy gap, - only 23% of 10th-grade children can read at their grade level, and 50% of 5th graders read at a grade-2 level. "Our writers often write what's popular on social media, not stories about our own traditions, heroes, and mythologies. If our children are only reading Western stories, who will they become?" she asked, highlighting the festival's role in nurturing Indian storytellers and celebrating indigenous narratives. She further added in order to build a strong ecosystem for children's literature they are offering fellowship program, which aims to provide financial support to children's authors.

Day 2 of the NLF festival offers major highlights for all ages.

For older children, a key session features author Veera Hiranandani discussing her book, Aml and the After, which explores post-Partition era, and a separate interactive session with Niyatee Sharma will delve into the world of bird nests.

Younger kids can enjoy a "roar-some" adventure with Garima Gupta's pop-up book Tara Goes Aahhnnhi and a story time with award-winning writer Paro Anand.

The day also features a panel on the power of reading in a screen-filled world and a variety of 10-minute performances by Goshtarang (a theatre group from Maharashtra).

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Rainfall occurred at few places over South Interior and at many places over Coastal Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast Sept 21: Rainfall to occur at some places over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	28	20.4	2.4
Bidar	32	21.6	00
Vijayapura	29.6	21	04
Dharwad	27.6	NA	1.6
Haveri	25.6	20.8	2.4
Kalaburagi	32.6	24.4	8.6
Raichur	31	23	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	29.5	23.3	5.1
Karwar	31.4	24.6	6.4
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	30.4	22.6	07

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	NA	NA	08
Bengaluru	26.2	20.9	2.1
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	28.6	20.7	00
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	28	20.9	00
Davangere	28	20	00
Hassan	27.7	19.1	0.5
Mysuru	29	20	05
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	28	20.2	1.4
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	35.3	24.2	00
Kolkata	34.9	28.6	05
Mumbai	30.8	25.4	61
Chennai	30.8	24.5	21
Pune	28.4	21.2	0.1
Hyderabad	31.6	22.4	08
Th'puram	31.9	24.4	00

POLITICS BY PROXY? State unit irked at being remote-controlled by Delhi leaders

Kejriwal's renewed Punjab focus underscores AAP unease

GAUTAM DHEER
CHANDIGARH

Arvind Kejriwal's reloaded focus on Punjab after his party's chastening rout in the Delhi Assembly polls this year comes as no surprise. After all, Punjab is now the only state under the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s command and control — at least for the next 18-odd months.

But all its stratagems in this state don't seem to gel with the ground reality. The AAP's political stock in Punjab has arguably been on a slide. The recent unprecedented deluge in the state that killed 56 people, besides swamping over 2,300 villages and damaging property and infrastructure worth Rs 13,800 crore, made matters worse, with the party being accused of being bystanders amid the crisis. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was admitted to a hospital in Mohali near here as the disaster escalated each day. His absence rankled when Kejriwal visited deluge-hit areas.

The AAP's problems in the state have more to do with the overindulgence of its Delhi bosses attempting to micromanage its Punjab affairs. Mann, who often wears a yellow turban in the style of an iconic martyr but freely bows before his Delhi masters, has only exacerbated the situation. And Mann, over the years, has done everything to justify this Delhi-centric approach. As a result, Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar called Mann a "de facto CM" and Kejriwal a "super CM".

Local AAP leaders claim that the state has been transformed into a rehabilitation zone for their Delhi counterparts. PTI FILE

Meanwhile, many of the AAP's Punjab MLAs and leaders are battling legal woes, from vigilance probes to charges of crimes like rape, molestation, and corruption. AAP MLA from Sanour, Harmeet Singh Pathanmajra, who is wanted in a rape case and has been on the run since September 2, has claimed that the FIR against him was a retaliatory move for his criticism of the AAP leadership's flood management and internal squabbles. Last week, a Punjab court jailed AAP MLA from Khadoor Sahib, Manjinder Singh Lalpura, for four years for assaulting and molesting a Dalit woman.

Speculations remain rife over Kejriwal entering Parliament as a Rajya Sabha member via Punjab. The AAP central leadership decided to ask sitting MP Sanjeev Arora to step down and contest the Ludhiana West Assembly by-election. This could facilitate Kejriwal's entry to the Upper House, although the AAP national convenor has denied its likelihood.

This aside, the growing influence of Manish Sisodia, who is now in charge of the party's Punjab affairs, and Satyender Jain, who pitches in as co-incharge — a remote-controlled manoeuvring of sorts by Delhi leaders — has irked the AAP's Punjab leaders. Local AAP leaders claim that the state has been transformed into a rehabilitation zone for their Delhi counterparts. Even Raghav Chadha is now active in Punjab, having hibernated for several months. All this, party sources say, has taken a toll on the AAP cadre, which remains more assorted than cohesive.

The way ahead

For a party besieged by perennial problems like farmer unrest, swelling state debt, drugs, and floods, the AAP will have to be the pick-and-shovel contender in the 2027 Punjab Assembly elections. Punjab topped the country in the list of debt-to-GSDP ratio at 40.35% at the end of 2022-23, according to the latest CAG report.

A restive street awaits the AAP. It was this restive sentiment, along with the people's anger and a clamour for change, that brought the AAP to power in 2022 with a resounding 92-out-of-117 score in the Assembly election. Its poll vows have seen limited fruition: For example, the Rs 1,500 monthly dole for women is still unfulfilled.

Sensing the trouble ahead, the AAP is trying to fix things. It's war against drugs — an emotive, unaddressed rot that earned the state the sobriquet "Udta Punjab" — is now more than 200 days old, and is showing effect. Over 30,000 drug smugglers have been arrested, and a massive amount of heroin and opium has been recovered.

As for politics, Punjab has witnessed a churn of sorts in the last few years, with almost all parties waning in credibility and popular support. The AAP took advantage of this with amplified expectations. Dissension and split within the SAD (Badal), the lack of a cohesive strategy, and an irresolute faith in the leadership of former deputy CM Sukhbir Badal have been impeding the party for some time now. Meanwhile, the Congress is plagued with internal strife and one-upmanship among leaders.

The AAP is no longer a part of the I.N.D.I.A bloc. Even when it was, it and the Congress did not forge an alliance for the Delhi and Punjab Assembly elections. The Punjab BJP is now out of the shadow of its former senior alliance partner, the SAD (Badal), having parted ways over the Central government's contentious and now-repealed farm law. The BJP is toiling beyond its traditional vote bank in urban areas. With the AAP winning just three of Punjab's 13 Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 elections, it will now have to pull out all stops to remain electorally relevant.

(The writer is a senior Chandigarh-based journalist.)

Morocco to have India's 1st overseas defence facility

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The first Indian overseas defence manufacturing facility is set to start in Morocco when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates a Tata-owned armoured vehicle production unit in Casablanca province during his maiden trip to the north African nation.

Rajnath will travel to Morocco on September 22-23, during which he will also hold a bilateral meeting with his Moroccan counterpart Abdeltif Loudiyi.

"A key highlight of the visit will be the inauguration of Tata Advanced Systems Maroc's new manufacturing facility for the Wheeled Armoured Platform 8x8 at Berrechid," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

This facility, the first-ever Indian defence manufacturing plant overseas, reflects the growing global footprint of India's defence industry, the ministry added.

Tata Advanced Systems Maroc is a subsidiary of Tata Advanced Systems Limited, the first Indian private sector company to produce and deliver wheeled armoured combat-ready vehicles for the Indian Army in 2022. The Moroccan facility, sources said, would be operational within the next 12 months, and the first batch of vehicles is likely to be rolled out in 2027.

Rajnath's bilateral meeting with Loudiyi will aim to strengthen defence, strategic and industry cooperation. The minister will also call on Morocco's Minister of Industry and Trade, Ryad Mezzour, to explore avenues for industrial collaboration besides interacting with the Indian community.

Both sides are also expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation. The MoU will provide an institutional framework to expand and deepen bilateral defence engagement, including exchanges, training, and industrial linkages.

PM to lay foundation stone for N-power plant in Raj on Sept 25

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Union government is set to get the ball rolling for the construction of a 2,800 MW nuclear power plant at Mahi-Banswara in Rajasthan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation stone on September 25.

The power plant will reportedly house four pressurised heavy-water reactors of 700-MW capacity each, and the first one will be ready in the next 6.5 years. The Mahi-Banswara project will reportedly be executed by a joint venture company formed by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (51%) and National Thermal Power Corporation (49%).

This will be the NTPC's first foray into nuclear-power generation in accordance with the Atomic Energy Act, 1962. Sources said the project would cost more than Rs 40,000 crore. The project site is situated on the right bank of the Mahi River, upstream of the Mahi-Bajaj Sagar reservoir.

VHP issues 'Hindus only' diktat for garba

MUMBAI/NAGPUR, PTI: The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Saturday said only Hindus should be given entry to 'garba' events marking Navratri and advised organisers to check the Aadhaar card of entrants for identification to avoid instances of "love jihad".

While Maharashtra minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule said organisers have the right to set conditions of entry at an event, provided it is being held with police permission, the Congress's Vijay Wadettiwar slammed the VHP for wanting to "set society on fire".

"Garba is not merely a dance but a form of worship to please the goddess. They (apparent reference to Muslims) do not believe in idol worship. Only those having faith in the rituals must be allowed to participate," VHP national spokesperson Shriraj Nair said.

Dependence on other countries our biggest enemy: Modi

Says Cong ignored strength of nation after independence

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a roadshow in Bhavnagar on Saturday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that "India has no real enemy" and that the country's biggest enemy was its dependence on other nations, urging the need to overcome it.

"We must keep reiterating that the greater our dependence on foreign countries, the greater the risk for national failure. For world peace, stability, and prosperity, the world's most populous nation must become self-reliant...," the prime minister said while addressing a public gathering in Bhavnagar on Saturday. He participated in the 'Samudra se Samruddhi' event, where he inaugurated and laid foundation stones of projects worth Rs 34,200 crore.

Blaming the Congress for "ignoring the strength of the nation", the prime minister said, "India never lacked capability. But after independence, the Congress ignored every strength of our nation. That is why, even after 6–7 decades of freedom, India could not achieve success it deserved."

"Congress governments trapped the country in the license-quota raj and kept it cut off from the global market. Later, when in the globalisation era, they chose only the path of imports. Even then, scams worth thousands of crores were committed. These policies caused tremendous harm to our youth," he said.

2 detained in Manipur over ambush on convoy

IMPHAL, PTI: Two persons were detained on Saturday in connection with the ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy, which claimed the lives of two personnel, police said.

A van, suspected to have been used in the attack in Nambol Sabal Leikai area on Friday evening, has also been recovered, they said.

Two jawans of the Assam Rifles were killed and five others injured when a group of armed men ambushed a vehicle of the paramilitary force.

"... Security forces carried out a massive operation in Shantipur and Ishok areas... Two persons were detained for further verification," the Manipur Police said in a statement late on Saturday.

The silver-blue coloured van was found at Mutum Yangbi, around 10 km from the ambush site, police said.

Mohanlal to receive Dadasaheb Phalke Award

NEW DELHI, PTI

Malayalam superstar Mohanlal has been named the recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2023, the country's highest recognition in the field of cinema, the I&B ministry announced on Saturday.

In a post on X, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said the actor, director and producer is being honoured on the recommendation of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award Selection Committee for his "iconic contribution to Indian cinema". The award will be presented to the 65-year-old during the 71st National Film Awards ceremony on September 23.

"Mohanlal's remarkable cinematic journey inspires generations... His unmatched talent, versatility, and relentless hard work have set a golden standard in Indian film history," the ministry said.

Mohanlal

With a career spanning over four decades, Mohanlal has acted in over 350 films across Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada.

Some of his most popular and critically-acclaimed movies include "Thanmathra", "Iruvar", "Drishyam", "Vanaprastham", "Company", "Munthirivallikal Thalirkkumbol" and "Pulimurugan".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the veteran actor, saying Mohanlal epitomises "excellence and versatility".

"With a rich body of work spanning decades, he stands as a leading light of Malayalam cinema, theatre and is deeply passionate about the culture of Kerala. He has also delivered remarkable performances in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi films.

"His cinematic and theatrical brilliance across mediums is truly inspiring. Congratulations to him on being conferred the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. May his accomplishments continue to inspire generations to come," PM Modi said.

I&B minister Ashwani Vaishnaw also congratulated the actor and said his legacy will keep inspiring "Bharat's creative spirit".

"Congratulations to Laletan @Mohanlal ji. From the adipoli, beautiful land of Kerala to audiences worldwide, his work has celebrated our culture and magnified our aspirations," he posted on X.

Panel recommends coaching-centre regulation, curriculum revamp

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

EASIER EDUCATION

- Committee recommends that coaching centres—particularly, their advertising practices, which often mislead students and parents—be regulated
- Highlights 'lack of alignment between CBSE's analytical and conceptual approach and the objective and MCQ format of entrance exams'
- Recommends that schools familiarise students with OMR-based testing

A nine-member panel formed by the Union Ministry of Education to look at ways of reducing students' dependence on coaching centres has recommended that they — particularly, their advertising practices, which often mislead students and parents — be regulated.

The committee has also asked that school curricula be redesigned to better align with competitive-exam formats, and that the frequency of entrance exams be increased throughout the year to reduce students' stress.

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) formed the panel in June over concerns regarding the disconnect between school curricula and the demands of competitive examinations such as JEE and NEET — especially between Classes 10 and 11. Chaired by the DHE secretary, the committee has as members the chairman of CBSE, members from IIT-Madras, NIT-Trichy, IIT-Kanpur, NCERT, and a member each from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya, and a private school, besides the Secretary of the Department of School Education (DSE).

The ministry has now asked that IIT Kanpur carry out a psychometric analysis of examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency. Additionally, the DSE and CBSE are to survey students to ascertain their level of engagement with coaching classes.

The committee met on August 25 with DHE Secretary Vineet Joshi as the chair.

"The lack of alignment between CBSE's analytical and conceptual approach and the objective, multiple-choice question (MCQ) format of entrance exams was seen as a root cause of coaching dependency," noted the panel in the meeting, details of which have been accessed by *DH*. The committee noted that a hybrid model of assessment — combining MCQs with subjective questions — would encourage deeper learning and reduce rote memorisation. It also recommended that schools familiarise students with Optical Mark Recognition (OMR)-based testing to reduce exam-related anxiety.

The panel asked that teachers be trained in coaching methodologies and competitive exam strategies. "A 'Professor of Practice' model was suggested, wherein domain experts from academia and industry could serve as visiting faculty to mentor students and support teachers," read the recommendations. Mandatory counselling sessions for students and parents were also called for.

Most notably, the panel emphasised the need to regulate coaching centres and said they should fully disclose teaching methods, faculty qualifications, and success rates.

STATE MOURNS

Assam grapples with shock after Zubeen Garg's demise

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Markets shut, streets deserted, fans playing out his popular and "heart touching" musical numbers on the streets. This sums up the scenes prevailing in most parts of Assam since Friday as the state awaits the mortal remains of superstar, singer, musician Zubeen Garg, who passed away in Singapore on Friday, reportedly while swimming in the sea.

"Zubeen da was a hope to live, to struggle in life...," a young, inconsolable Deepjyoti Bayan said, at an event on Friday evening, on the Gauhati University campus, where the students and teachers paid their tributes. Many sang Zubeen's popular numbers and cried together. "We can't accept him going like this just at the age of 52," his friend Raktim Bhuyan said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who visited Garg's residence in Guwahati on Saturday morning, said Zubeen's mortal remains will be kept at the Sarusajai sports complex to allow his fans to pay their last tributes.

Later, the Chief Minister left for New Delhi to receive his mortal remains from Singapore, which is likely to reach Guwahati on Sunday morning. His mortal remains will first be taken to his residence before the mass condolence.

Sarma said multiple FIRs have been filed against Shyamkanu Mahanta, the organiser of the Northeast Festival and Zubeen's associate Sidharth Sarma, in connection with singer's death.

People pay tribute to singer Zubeen Garg in Guwahati on Saturday. PTI

Garg was in Singapore to attend the festival and died while swimming after a reported journey on a yacht in the sea. The organisers on Friday said they heard that Zubeen had gone out for scuba diving.

Mahanta said they were busy in business meetings with Singapore industrialists on Friday when they were informed about mishap.

Zubeen reportedly had breathing difficulties while swimming in sea, and he collapsed. He was declared dead in a hospital. "Zubeen used a life jacket, but he later removed it as it was oversized," Sarma said.

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Judges must act with humility, responsibility: CJI Gavai

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Chief Justice of India B R Gavai on Saturday flagged the conduct of some judges that was leading to discontent in the bar, saying that judges wielded immense power, but it must be carried with the utmost humility and responsibility.

CJI B R Gavai

Addressing the 10th All India Conference of the Central Administrative Tribunal in the national capital, the CJI said, "Recently, we noticed that there was discontent in the bar due to the conduct of some judges. I read a newspaper item or on Google, wherein, because of one judge in one high court — I won't name the judge nor the HC — a young lawyer was so browbeaten that he fell unconscious in the court."

He underscored that as judges, one must also accept the position that judges and lawyers were like two wheels of the golden chariot of justice — non-superior, non-inferior.

He said that unless judges and lawyers worked together, the institution of administration of justice could not function properly.

The CJI noted that litigants appeared before the court with the faith that they would receive justice.

"I urge you to honour this responsibility, not just within official spaces but outside as well," he said.

He took inspiration from US civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr when he said, "We need leaders not in love with money but in love with justice. Not in love with publicity but in love with humanity."

The CJI also pointed out that in the All India Judges Association case, the Supreme Court reintroduced the requirement of practice of three years for a law graduate to be eligible for the examination of judicial magistrate first class.

"It was noticed that fresh graduates who did not have any experience or exposure of the court, the chair would go in their hands on the very first day and they would prohibit or ill-treat lawyers who had standing for 40-50 years. Therefore, we thought that it was necessary that the candidates appearing before the examination must be exposed to the court's practice and procedure," he said.

FENDING OFF PRESSURES Lula resists Trump's policies as Modi seeks to ink trade deal

Brazil and India face US tariffs with divergent strategies

CARLOS FREDERICO PEREIRA DA SILVA GAMA

Twenty-five years ago, Brazil played a leading role in opposing ALCA, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, modelled on NAFTA. After stabilising its currency and privatising state assets in the 1990s, Brazil resisted pressure from its main trade partner, the US, to sign the deal, viewing it as a threat to industrial growth. At the time, Brazil was the world's second-largest recipient of foreign direct investment after China, and MERCOSUR had achieved peak integration with Argentina.

In 2025, Brazilian reactions to tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump were incensed. Unlike India – a strategic US partner – Brazil under President Lula da Silva did not immediately engage with Trump's team. US-Brazilian ties remained strained since the ALCA debacle and worsened after Trump's return to the White House. Currently, the US has no ambassador in Brasília, and Trump declined Lula's invitation to attend COP30.

Once an industrial powerhouse, Brazil is now a commodity giant. Globalisation favoured Brazilian agribusiness, boosting GDP and gaining decisive influence in Brasília. As the flipside to commodities' rise, deindustrialisation hollowed out parts of the economy, leaving "rust belts" where workers and middle classes struggle. This circumstance – reminiscent of post-Cold War US – fuelled right-wing populism. Former president Jair Bolsonaro, a Trump supporter, attempted a coup in January 2023, narrowly averted by civil society and republican institutions. Bolsonaro is currently on trial at the Supreme Court, intensifying US-Brazil tariff disputes. Trump blamed Brazil for undermining civil liberties, justifying tariffs politically, building on previous clashes between judge Alexandre de Moraes and US tech giants Meta and X. The Supreme Court's authority is challenged by Congress, controlled by Bolsonaro allies.

Political tensions and strained ties between Lula and Trump have so far blocked progress.

Brazil's stance diverged from other BRICS members, such as India – which, even before tariffs, sought deals with the US and EU. For Washington, India seems more inclined to long-term partnerships, due to sustained economic growth while Brazil stagnated after 2015. After 2001, China replaced the US as Brazil's largest economic partner and investor, with significant geopolitical implications. Only 15% of Brazilian exports now travel north through the Panama Canal. Brazil's posture on Trump's tariffs appears more like domestic damage control than rapprochement with a former key ally.

During the latest BRICS summit in Rio in July, Brazil attempted to mobilise the group against US tariffs. The idea of replacing the US Dollar in intra-BRICS banking resurfaced. However, in a meeting overshadowed by ongoing wars in West Asia and Eastern Europe, Lula received only a lukewarm response.

As Brazil seeks closer ties with BRICS members, political tensions with the US are rising. In August 2025, Trump cancelled joint military exercises with Brazil just days before a US fleet sailed to Venezuela, Brazil's neighbour. The action was justified as part of a police raid against drug traffickers "flooding into the US." Around the same time, a politically divided MERCOSUR rushed through a long-delayed trade agreement with the EU – showing Lula is prepared to negotiate, but not on Trump's terms. Brazil also participated in military parades marking 80 years since the end of World War II in Russia and China. As Lula travelled to Moscow, the political gulf between Brazil, the US and NATO became more apparent.

If Lula and Trump now share few commonalities, India remains an indispensable Quad member. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was welcomed at the White House in February 2025 and is scheduled to meet Trump again in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly – despite disagreements after the Pahalgam terrorist attacks. Trade relations between India and the US are rising, reaching 130 billion dollars in 2024, with a 46 billion surplus for India. However, such figures alone do not justify trade tariffs. India still accounts for less than 2% of total US global trade.

India and Brazil received the same tariff rate from the US (50%) and initially reacted similarly. Lula and Modi both spoke of bringing production closer to home and favouring local producers. In foreign policy, however, their responses diverged sharply. Tariffs on India appear likely to be reduced soon (as with the EU and UK). Brazil, by contrast, seems prepared to endure them, as the US appears "smaller" in a multipolar world.

On the verge of a re-election campaign, Lula faces persistent unpopularity. Yet tariffs have provided a mixed blessing. Economic liabilities are offset by a firmer foreign policy stance benefiting the president domestically. Therefore, the Brazilian government – like President Claudia Sheinbaum in Mexico – has invested in speeches, slogans and campaigns emphasising national sovereignty. If Trump wants to make America "great again," in Latin America trade tariffs once again fuel sovereignty.

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, IRGS)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva at the closing session of the G20 Summit in New Delhi. PTI FILE

WORLD AT A GLANCE

India's trade minister to visit US tomorrow for trade talks

▸ India's Trade Minister Piyush Goyal will visit Washington on September 22 to accelerate talks on a long-pending trade deal, following recent progress in negotiations resumed last week, Reuters reports.

"The delegation plans to take forward the discussions with a view to achieving an early conclusion of a mutually beneficial trade agreement," an official statement said on Saturday. On September 16, a US delegation led by Brendan Lynch, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, met Indian trade officials headed by Chief Negotiator Rajesh Agrawal in New Delhi. Trade discussions with US officials on Tuesday were described as "positive" and "forward-looking" by New Delhi, after US President Donald Trump struck a more conciliatory tone following punitive tariffs on India over its Russian oil purchases.

It was not immediately clear whether New Delhi would discuss the Trump administration's H-1B visa fee hike, the demand to cut Russian oil purchases, or open its agriculture and dairy sector to US companies, a major demand from Washington.

Israel to use 'unprecedented force'

▸ The Israeli military warned that it would operate with "unprecedented force" in Gaza City, telling residents to flee as it presses its ground offensive on the territory's largest urban centre, AFP reports from Gaza City.

Israel has pummelled Gaza City with air strikes and tank fire in its bid to seize it, nearly two years into the war that has devastated the Palestinian territory and left Gaza City gripped by a United Nations-declared famine.The military launched its ground assault on Tuesday and has for days been telling residents to head south, but Palestinians say the journey is expensive and they do not know where to go.

A police car is set on fire during a protest against the asylum policy in The Hague on Saturday. AFP

Netherlands protest turns violent

▸ A right-wing protest in the Netherlands erupted into violence and chaos on Saturday as rioters clashed with police and vandalised a political party's office, AP/PTI reports from The Hague.

Police used tear gas and a water cannon to disperse rioters who threw objects at officers and torched a police car. There was no immediate word on injuries or arrests. Dutch media showed rioters also attacking an office of a centrist political party, D66. "Scum. You keep your hands off political parties," the party's leader Rob Jetten said in a message on X.

'Trump Gold Card' for foreigners launched

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, PTI

US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order entitled 'The Gold Card', aimed at setting up a new visa pathway for foreigners of extraordinary ability who are committed to supporting the United States.

Under the Gold Card programme, signed on Friday, individuals who can pay $1 million to the US Treasury, or $2 million if a corporation is sponsoring them, will get access to expedited visa treatment and a path to a Green Card. "We're taking in hundreds of billions of dollars. The Gold Card will be taking in hundreds of billions of dollars, and companies will be able to keep some people they need," Trump said.

Trump emphasised the gold card will be a "fantastic thing" and "we're going to take that money and we're going to reduce taxes, we're going to reduce debt". "To apply, an applicant must pay a nonrefundable processing fee," the official website of the programme said.

The website said that if approved, an individual "must make a gift of $1 million, which has been determined to provide sufficient evidence that the individual will substantially benefit the United States."

The applicants must be "eligible for lawful permanent resident status, admissible to the United States, and a visa must be available," the website added. "The Order directs the Secretary of Commerce to deposit the gifts into the Treasury and use them to promote commerce," the White House said.

The card prioritises entry for high-value contributors to American society, including successful entrepreneurs, investors, and businessmen, it said.

US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick speaks while launching the "Trump Gold Card" at the White House in Washington DC on Friday. REUTERS

Cyberattack hits major European airports

LONDON, AFP

Major European airports, including Brussels, Berlin and London's Heathrow, were hit on Saturday by a cyberattack on check-in systems, causing cancellations and long delays for thousands.

Dublin and Cork airports in Ireland were also affected, Dublin Airport said on X, adding that it was experiencing "minor impacts" from a "Europe-wide software issue".

According to aviation watchdog Eurocontrol, the airports were "reporting disruptions in IT systems related to passenger handling."

At least 10 flights were cancelled at Brussels Airport and another 17 delayed by over an hour after the system was hit by a "cyberattack" late on Friday, the airport said. "We have become aware of a cyber-related disruption to our MUSE software in select airports," airport service provider Collins Aerospace told AFP. "The impact is limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop," added Collins Aerospace, which has a presence in 170 airports globally.

Brussels Airport said the attack continued to affect flight schedules on Saturday.

Eurocontrol said airlines had been asked to cancel half their flights to and from Brussels between 0400 GMT on Saturday and 0200 GMT on Monday because of the attack.

London's Heathrow Airport — Europe's busiest — said its check-in and boarding systems, also provided by Collins Aerospace, were hit by a "technical issue" that "may cause delays for departing passengers".

SU DO KU X - 3683

							3	2
6				7	5			8
			3	2				
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4		7	9					
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SOLUTION TO 3682

2	6	5	4	1	9	3	8	7
7	8	9	3	5	2	1	4	6
3	1	4	7	8	6	5	2	9
9	7	8	5	2	3	6	1	4
1	5	3	8	6	4	7	9	2
4	2	6	1	9	7	8	5	3
5	4	2	6	3	1	9	7	8
6	9	1	2	7	8	4	3	5
8	3	7	9	4	5	2	6	1

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-Tender Notice

PCMM/CLW/HWH on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/ likely suppliers are requested to look up the website **www.ireps.gov.in**. These are E-Tenders only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. For detailed instructions please refer to website. **[A] Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/HWH/E-Procurement/48, Dated: 11/09/2025. Sl. No.; Tender No.; Description of Stores; Quantity; Due On; Tender Cost are as follows: [292]; 31252945B;** 1) RUBBER PACKING [SPONGE] FOR OCU 1500X40X14 MM, [CELLULAR RUBBER] as per CLW SPECN. NO. ASTMD-1056-GRADE.RE-43C GR. 2) RUBBER PACKING [SPONGE] FOR OCU 1250X70X14 MM, [CELLULAR RUBBER] as per CLW SPECN. NO. ASTMD-1056-GRADE, RE-43C GR. [Quantity Tolerance (+/-): 5%age, Item Category: Normal, Total PO value variation Permitted: Max 8 lacs]; **As Per Tender/ Document; 25/09/2025; ₹ 0.00. [293]; 14252749A;** C K T . BREAKER WITHOUT AUXILIARY CONTACTS (TYPE - 8) TO SPEC./DRG. No. CLW/ES/3 /0050/C; **As Per Tender/ Document; 26/09/2025; ₹ 0.00. [294]; 30255010;** Portable Spectrometer for Chemical Analysis, Qty. 02 nos., as per Specification No. MT/2382 Date 29.08.2025; **As Per Tender/Document; 07/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [295]; 14252741A;** AUXILIARY CONTACTOR FOR VCB / PANTOGRAPH IN SB1 & SB2 TO SPEC./DRG. No. LW/ES/3/0040/C; **As Per Tender/Document; 10/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [296]; 25255101;** Grit/Shot Blasting Plant, Qty. 01 no. as per Specification no. MT/2357 Date 16.06.2025, HSN Code: 84243000. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]; **As Per Tender/ Document; 06/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [297]; 14252671A;** 1) SET OF GASKET FOR WAG-9HC TO DRG. /SPEC. No. CLW/ES/3/0142/G (set detail attached). 2) SET OF GASKET FOR WAG-9HC (CONSISTING OF 04 ITEMS) FOR ELAAU/DANKUNI TO DRG. /SPEC. No. CLW/ES/3/0142/G (set detail attached). [Quantity Tolerance (+/): 5%age, Item Category: Normal, Total PO value variation Permitted: Max 8 lacs]; **As Per Tender/Document; 03/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [298]; 14252527C;** SURGE ARRESTER TO SPEC./DRG. No. CLW/ES/3/0016/C; **As Per Tender/Document; 16/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [B] Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/HWH/E-Procurement/49 Dated: 12/09/2025. Sl. No.; Tender No.; Description of Stores; Quantity; Due On; Tender Cost are as follows: [299]; 14252720A;** SET OF PIPE SADDLE FOR WAG-9HC TO SPEC/DRG No. CLW/ES/3/0038/F (set details attached) [Quantity Tolerance (+/-): 5%age, Item Category : Normal, Total PO value variation Permitted: Max 8 lacs]; **As Per Tender/Document; 03/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [300]; 14252931A;** TERMINAL BOX TO SPEC./DRG. No. CLW/ES/3/0062/A. [Quantity Tolerance (+/-): 5%age, Item Category: Normal, Total PO value variation Permitted: Max 8 lacs]; **As Per Tender / Document; 06/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [301]; 25255139;** Magnetic Particle Testing Machine for Axles, Qty. 01 no. as per Specification no. MT/2384 Dated 30.08.2025, HSN Code: 90318000. [Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery]; **As Per Tender/Document; 08/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [302]; 31255012;** Bare Panel for Primary Current Sensor Box as per BLW Drg Nos. ELSK-178 to 182 & ELSK-198 to199; **As Per Tender/ Document; 08/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [303]; 14252674A;** SET OF BLOWER GASKET FOR WAG-9HC TO SPECN.NO.CLW/ES/3/0457/F (SET DETAILS A TTACHED) [Quantity Tolerance (+/-): 5%age, Item Category : Normal, Total PO value variation Permitted: Max 8 lacs]; **As Per Tender/ Document; 03/10/2025; ₹ 0.00. [304]; 14252652A;** SET OF NON-METALLIC PIPE (SMOKE DETECTOR PIPE) FOR WAP-5 TO DRG. / SPEC. NO.CLW/ES/3/0413/C (set detail attached) [Quantity Tolerance (+/-): 5%age, Item Category : Normal, Total PO value variation Permitted: Max 8 lacs]; **As Per Tender/Document; 04/10/2025; ₹ 0.00.**

PR6/206 **PCMM/CLW/HOWRAH**

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ಎಕ್ಸ್–ಸರ್ವೀಸ್‌ಮೆನ್ ಗೃಹ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಘ ನಿಯಮಿತ

ನಂ. 652/ಬಿ, 2ನೇ ಮಹಡಿ, ಡಾ॥ ರಾಜಕುಮಾರ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, 'ಡಿ' ಬ್ಲಾಕ್, 2ನೇ ಹಂತ, ರಾಜಾಜಿನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು : 560010. ದೂರವಾಣಿ 080–23521377/ +91 8031204350 ದಿನಾಂಕ : 20–09–2025

2024–25ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಸರ್ವ ಸದಸ್ಯರ ಸಭೆಯ ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಎಕ್ಸ್–ಸರ್ವೀಸ್‌ಮೆನ್ ಗೃಹ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಘ ನಿಯಮಿತ ಇದರ 2024–25ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಸರ್ವಸದಸ್ಯರ ಮಹಾ ಸಭೆಯನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ 24–09–2025 ರ ಬುಧವಾರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ಸರಿಯಾಗಿ ಸಂಘದ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾದ **ಶ್ರೀಯುತ ಬಿ.ಎನ್. ಸೋಮಸುಂದರ್ ರವರ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಶಂಕರ ಸೇವಾ ಸಮಿತಿ, 4ನೇ 'ಎಂ' ಬ್ಲಾಕ್, ಎಸ್.ಜೆ.ಆರ್. ಕಾಲೇಜು ಎದುರು, ಡಾ॥ ರಾಜಕುಮಾರ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ರಾಜಾಜಿನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು–560 010ರಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಸಲು ತೀರ್ಮಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.**

ಎಲ್ಲಾ ನಿಯತ /ಅರ್ಹ ಸದಸ್ಯರಿಗೆ **(Regular Members)** ಪ್ರತ್ಯೇಕವಾಗಿ ಸೂಚನಾ ಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಅಂಚೆ ಮೂಲಕ ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ಕಳುಹಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಸೂಚನಾ ಪತ್ರ ತಲುಪದೇ ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ, ಈ ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನೇ ಸೂಚನಾ ಪತ್ರವೆಂದು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಿ ಸಂಘದಿಂದ ನೀಡಿದ ಗುರುತಿನ ಚೀಟಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಭೆಗೆ ಆಗಮಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿ ವಿನಂತಿ

ಸಂಘದ ಅರ್ಹ / ನಿಯತ ಸದಸ್ಯರು ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಸಂಘದಿಂದ ನೀಡಿರುವ ಗುರುತಿನ ಚೀಟಿ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸಂಘದ ಅರ್ಹ / ನಿಯತ ಸದಸ್ಯರು ಒಟ್ಟು 5 ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಸಭೆಗಳ ಪೈಕಿ 2 ಸಭೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಹಾಜರಾಗಲು ತಪ್ಪಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ/ ಚುನಾವಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮತ ಚಲಾಯಿಸಲು ಹಾಗೂ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧಿಸಲು ಅರ್ಹರಾಗಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಕೆಲಸದ ಸಮಯ: ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ್ನ 3:30 ರಿಂದ ಸಂಜೆ: 6:30ರ ವರೆಗೆ: ರಜಾ ದಿನಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊರತು ಪಡಿಸಿ

ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿ ಪರವಾಗಿ, ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿ

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Publication of Corrigendum to Tender Notice No.: CAO/CN/BNC/139/2025 Dated 04.09.2025 (Sl.No. 1)

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Construction of Office, Service Buildings (S+3 & G+5) and miscellaneous development works in Bengaluru Cantonment area including Electrical works (Composite work). **Sub Work-I:** Construction of RRB office building (S+3) at Bangalore Cantonment (BNC) station. **Sub Work-II:** Construction of Geo tech lab, SSE/W/BNC (OL) office, SSE/HQ/CN/BNC office, Supervisor rest house and Canteen as G+5 structure at Bangalore Cantonment (BNC) station. **Sub Work-III:** Miscellaneous works of external development like Bitumen Road, ground, compounds, porta cabins and workstations at Bangalore Cantonment (BNC) station. **(Tender Ref. No.: BNC-REDEV-MISC-WORKS)**	**Rs. 16,07,82,205/-**

Date of Closing	
Existing	**Revised**
26.09.2025 (15:00 hrs)	**10.10.2025**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Engineer/Construction/ Works/Bengaluru Cantt.

PUB/487/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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RFP FOR APPOINTMENT OF DETAILED DESIGN CONSULTANT

Tender Notice No.: CON/2025/SEP/02, **Dated:** 11-09-2025. E - Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Tender No.:** CE/CON/J-I/DDC/2025/13; **Name of Work:** Request for Proposal (RFP) for Appointment of Detailed design consultant in connection with (a) rectification of alignment and collapse in tunnel 25 and tunnel 26 (from km 89.678 at portal 1 of tunnel no. 25 to km 92.557 at portal 2 of tunnel no. 26) and (b) design of new tunnel no. 28 in alternate alignment: development of master plan, design, drawing, methodology and supervision during execution, in connection with Jiribam-Imphal new rail line project. **Approx. Value :** ₹17,05,09,445.52/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **14:30** hrs. on **22-10-2025** and **opening** at **15:30** hrs. on **22-10-2025**. For complete information and tender document of e-Tender will be available in website **www.ireps.gov.in**

CE/Con/Manipur Project/MLG

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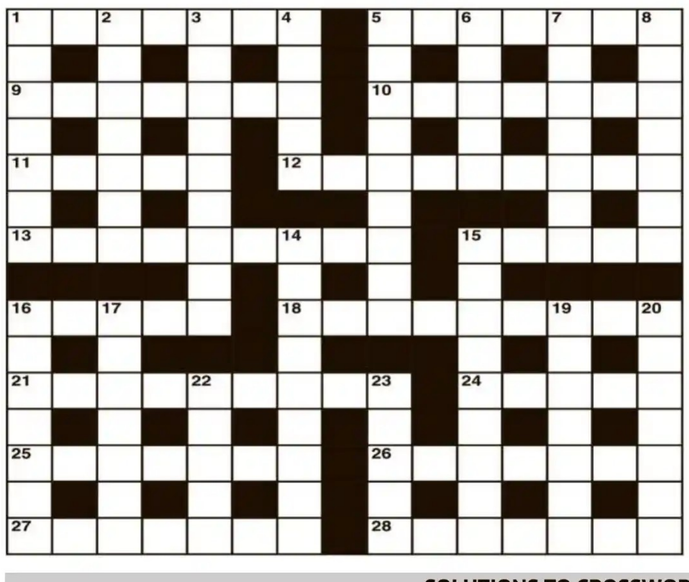


ACROSS
1 Apt to break easily (7)
5 Gathering of crops (7)
9 Narrow-minded (7)
10 Speak ill of (7)
11 French painter and sculptor (5)
12 Too soon to know (5,4)
13 Scented dried petals mixture (3-6)
15 Gullible (5)
16 Spacious (5)
18 Without a word or sound (2,7)
21 Bit by bit (9)
24 Slightly wet (5)
25 Expression of respect (7)
26 Larva of toad (7)
27 Giving read-out in figures (7)
28 Musician performing alone (7)

DOWN
1 Steady accumulation (5-2)
2 Visible (2,5)
3 Tale defying belief (4,5)
4 Uncanny (5)
5 Random (3-2-4)
6 Willing (5)
7 Try to equal (7)
8 Betrayal of allegiance (7)
14 Kick up a fuss (5,4)
15 A winner's Olympic award (4,5)
16 Generally reckoned (7)
17 Initial (7)
19 Capital of Kenya (7)
20 Plead with (7)
22 Break out suddenly (5)
23 Egyptian water lily (5)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4006

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, Prim-rosé 10, Pie (pi) 11, Imp-air 12, Tun-Dr-a 13, Appoint (a point) 14, Da-I-s (rev) 15, AD-minister 17, Glad rags 18, De-bat-ed 19, OS-lo 21, Gle-ans 24, Sticking at nothing 27, Adh-ere 29, Even(t) 30, Sp-R-outs 33, Complies 35, Dis-covered 36, Snap (rev) 37, Me-a-nder 38, Ra-di(d)-sh 40, In-(bit)ter-n 41, Doe (dough) 42, Back-chat.
DOWN: 1, Ground-less 2, A-M-ID 3, For a ti-me 4, (si)De-parts 5, Seeing round 6, D-Ist-raught 7, Spid-er 8, Living on 10, Pip-ER 16, Ima-GI-ne 20, S-pare 22, Epi-sode 23, Understands 25, Keep in mind 26, Gather-s-way 28, Dr-owning 31, P-rotract 32, Ascri-be 34, Popped 35, Dod-.g.e 39, Duck.

EASY
ACROSS: 9, Cocktail 10, Bee 11, Action 12, Spider 13, Venison 14, Ripe 15, Fibreglass 17, Meanders 18, Servile 19, Iris 21, Nibble 24, Tenement buildings 27, Tureen 29, Erne 30, Dignity 33, Occupant 35, Reasonable 36, Omit 37, Drizzle 38, Assume 40, Volume 41, Err 42, Averting.
DOWN: 1, Compliment 2, Skid 3, Madrigal 4, Fluvial 5, Pessimistic 6, Maintained 7, Stored 8, Corporal 10, Bonus 16, Revenge 20, Robin 22, Bonanza 23, Entertainer 25, Manhandled 26, Settlement 28, Uncommon 31, Isolated 32, Caveman 34, Untrue 35, Razor 39, Sate.

KSCA president Bhat in fray for a BCCI post

NEW DELHI, PTI: Some of the seasoned BCCI administrators and key decision makers held a rather informal meeting here on Saturday to finalise the candidates for the vacant posts in the Board ahead of the annual general meeting on September 28.

It has been learnt that those who were in contention for the posts have been summoned for the meeting, and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) president Raghuram Bhat is among them.

Raghuram Bhat

Former India spinner Bhat, whose tenure as KSCA president will end on September 30, could be drafted into one of the vacant positions. As things stand now, Bhat might not stand again in the KSCA election which could happen in October or November.

However, former India spinner Harbhajan Singh, who has been nominated as the Punjab Cricket Association's representative for the AGM, was not a part of Saturday's meeting.

It was not immediately clear as to whether former India skipper Sourav Ganguly, who is representing the Cricket Association of Bengal in the AGM, attended the meeting in the national capital.

Currently, the BCCI is looking to appoint a successor to president Roger Binny

IN BRIEF

Alvas, Income Tax clinch titles

▸ Alvas Mangaluru defeated Karnataka Police 3-1 in the men's final of the Karnataka State Senior Volleyball Championship, winning 25-22, 21-25, 25-23, 25-22, reports DHNS.

In the women's final, Income Tax overcame Postal 3-1 with scores of 23-25, 25-11, 25-17, 25-16. Both matches were held on the concluding day of the championship. The tournament, organised by the Volleyball Association of Karnataka, marked the return of the state championship after a long gap.

WC winner Boateng retires

▸ Former Germany defender Jerome Boateng, who won the World Cup in 2014, formally announced his retirement from the game on Friday, reports AFP from Berlin.

The 37-year-old centre-back played 76 times for Germany, scoring once. Boateng won two Champions League titles with Bayern Munich, in 2013 and 2020, as well as nine Bundesliga crowns.

3rd footballer gets killed

▸ Ecuadorian footballer player Jonathan Gonzalez was killed on Friday in what was the third murder of an athlete in the South American country since the start of September, according to police, reports AFP from Quito.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET
Asia Cup (Super 4s): India vs Pakistan **(8 pm). LIVE** on **Sony Ten 1, Sony Liv.**

ATHLETICS
World Championships: Day 9 **(5:30 am). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL
EPL: Sunderland vs Aston Villa, Bournemouth vs Newcastle **(both 6:30 pm)**, Arsenal vs Man City **(9 pm). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network.**

BADMINTON
China Masters: Finals **(7:30 am). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

MOTORSPORT
Formula 1: Azerbaijan GP **(main race 4:30 pm). LIVE** on **F1Tv Pro, FanCode.**

CRICKET ASIA CUP

More spice to India-Pak clash now

With no-handshake episode still playing, Surya & Co take on archrivals in a Super 4s match

R KAUSHIK
DUBAI

It's taken the T20 Asia Cup 11 days and 12 matches to catch fire. After an elaborate build-up dominated by off-field one-upmanship, the league phase ended in dramatic fashion on Friday in Abu Dhabi, with unfancied Oman putting favourites India through the wringer before going down by 21 runs.

Perhaps this is the cue for the on-field action to match the frenzied developments in the backrooms, catalysed by Suryakumar Yadav and his men's refusal under instructions to shake hands with their Pakistani opponents when the teams locked horns in a Group A encounter last Sunday.

As another Sunday beckons, another chapter in this storied, often prickly rivalry is set to be scripted at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. The results of the past several days will hold no import beyond bragging rights. With the slate wiped clean, there is everything to play for as the traditional foes kick off their respective Super 4s' campaigns.

Before running into a tartar in Oman, India had been on top of their game, rolling UAE and Pakistan over with consummate ease. Fuelled by their assortment of spinning resources, they laid down the gauntlet which no one else from their group truly picked up. Not too much should be read into how the Oman fixture devolved. India were in experimental mode after benching Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakravarthy and reshuffling their batting order, while Jatinder Singh's starry-eyed outfit took the nothing-to-lose approach to heart by targeting India's 'lesser' bowlers, who clearly suffered from lack of match-play.

India will be back at full strength on Sunday. Axar Patel, who left the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium park on Friday after banging his head on the turf while shelling a difficult catch, should be available for selection, which is wonderful news on various counts. Axar is an underrated but influential cog in the slick Indian wheel; he doesn't mind being out of the limelight though his all-round skills compel attention and admiration.

Abhishek Sharma has been India's enforcer, as he has been since his debut 14 months back, striking the ball crisply and cleanly. He has been dismissed in the 30s in all his three hits here and therefore has the added motivation of kicking on to bigger things; Sanju Samson will derive confidence from his half-century, never mind that he was way below his fluent best.

Bumrah's fierce right hand and Kuldeep Yadav's supple left wrist hold the key to how quickly, and well, India impose themselves on a fragile, uncertain Pakistani batting unit. Saim Ayub has courted three ducks on the bounce, Salman Agha's men haven't benefitted from constant shifting of positions and Shaheen Shah Afridi has made a strong pitch for being recognised as Pakistan's best batter of the tournament so far, none of which ought to inspire too much confidence. Pakistan have a history of tearing the formbook to shreds when they are pushed to a corner, which is where they find themselves now after adopting a defiant, aggressive mien in the aftermath of the no-handshake episode. They might believe they have the bowling to challenge a power-packed Indian batting unit, but unless they have buried their head in the sand, they won't be unaware of how patchy and inconsistent their own batters have been.

As has been the norm in recent times, the balance of power seems emphatically tilted in India's side. Man for man, they are the superior, more rounded outfit but as Oman reiterated, the sum of the parts being greater than the whole isn't merely a cute idiom.

LIVE, SONY TEN 1 & TEN 5, 8:00 PM

Jasprit Bumrah (left), who was rested for the Oman game, and Axar Patel, who had walked off after banging head to the turf during India's previous match, will be available for selection for their Super 4s opener against Pakistan on Sunday. AFP

Pycroft stays as Pak boycott media interaction

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has once again assigned the high-voltage India-Pakistan Asia Cup Super 4s game on Sunday to its Elite Panel Match Referee Andy Pycroft despite PCB's repeated requests to strike him off the roster, reports PTI from Dubai.

"Andy Pycroft is the match referee for Indo-Pak game," a tournament source said.

Meanwhile, Pakistan did not interact with the media ahead of the Super4s contest.

"Pakistan have once again cancelled pre match presser conference in order to avoid questions on Pycroft appointment and no handshake controversy."

Andy Pycroft

The list of match officials for the Sunday's game hasn't yet been made public. The other match referee in the tournament is former West Indies captain Richie Richardson. Pycroft was the match referee when Indian team as a policy decision, didn't shake hands with the Pakistan team but the Zimbabwean found himself in the centre of the controversy after India skipper Suryakumar Yadav didn't follow the convention at the toss.

The Pakistan team had written two mails to ICC, first requesting Pycroft's removal from the tournament and then asking the global body to remove him from their games. Both the demands were outrightly rejected by the ICC.

Hassan, Hridoy power Bangladesh past Sri Lanka

DUBAI, PTI: Opener Saif Hassan and Towhid Hridoy struck spirited fifties to back their frugal bowlers as Bangladesh registered a nervy four-wicket win over Sri Lanka in their Asia Cup Super Fours match here on Saturday.

Sri Lanka made 168 for seven, riding on Dasun Shanaka's powerful 64 (37 balls), but Bangladesh found perfect riposte in Saif (61, 45 balls) and Hridoy (58, 37 balls), ending up at 169/6 in 19.5 overs.

Bangladesh never really floundered in a tricky chase despite losing Tanzid Hasan in the first over itself to Nuwan Thushara.

Skipper Litton Das gave good company to Saif as the pair added 59 runs for the second wicket in 5.2 overs.

Saif was in flowing touch as he carted left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage, who joined the team after visiting home to attend his father's funeral, for two sixes before adding another maximum off Thushara.

Saif reached his fifty in 35 balls but lost Das. Saif then had a nice little alliance of 54 for the third wicket with Hridoy, who punished spinner Kamind Mendis for 16 runs in the 15th over, as Bangladesh moved closer.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 168/7 in 20 overs (Kusal Mendis 34, Dasun Shanaka 64 not out; Mustafizur Rahman 3-20, Mahedi Hasan 2-25) lt to Bangladesh: 169/6 in 19.5 overs (Saif Hassan 61, Towhid Hridoy 58; Wanindu Hasaranga 2-22). **Result:** Bangladesh won by 4 wickets. **PoM:** Saif Hassan.

Saif Hassan. AFP

Pugilist Jaismine punching past gold and into the future

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

A certain Sandeep Lamboria of Bhiwani was taken aback when his sister-in-law approached with a unique request. "*Chinu beti ko boxing karna hai* (My daughter Chinu wants to be a boxer)," said Joginder, mother of the teenage girl. That was unusual for the former international boxer, even though he was one of the inspirations for his niece. That's because no Lamboria girl ever took up sports, let alone boxing.

However, one glance at the girl and Sandeep knew he had another boxer in his family. "She was tall and her arms were long, until her knees, that's crucial in boxing as you will have a longer reach for your punches," recalls Sandeep while talking to *DH*.

More than a decade down the line, the same Chinu, better known as Jaismine Lamboria now, became a gold medallist (57kg) at the recently-concluded World Boxing Championships in Liverpool. However, from a teenage girl who wanted to be a boxer in Bhiwani to becoming the world champion, the journey has seen many failures.

Jaismine Lamboria (left) won her first World Championship title in Liverpool recently.

Especially in the last three years, since her bronze (60kg) on a Commonwealth Games debut. Post 2022 Birmingham, she fell in the quarterfinals of the 2022 Asian Games and the 2023 World Championships. This was followed by a weight class change to 57kg for the 2024 Olympics. The switch to a lower class only brought a fresh set of challengers as she went out in the first round in Paris for another career setback.

However, for someone who only recalls getting beaten up by male boxers at the ring during her formative years under uncles Sandeep and Parvinder at the Lamboria Boxing Academy, Jaismine knows better than anyone that boxing is all about getting back on your feet after taking hits.

"I believe this (gold medal) is because of all of my struggles in the recent years in international boxing," said the 24-year-old Naib Subedar of the Indian Army. "I would lose so many bouts because I would lack something on that day. But they only taught me to come back stronger. This world title is the result of the hard work done over the years."

Speaking of the hard work, her national team coach, Chhote Lal Yadav, who is well known for training six-time world champion Mary Kom, provided insight into how the coaching team helped make Jaismine the world champion she is today. The coaching team identified that, despite her long reach, Jaismine's punches were not landing with enough power, and the training and sparring sessions focused on landing punches for hours and with venom. Jaismine also went the extra mile to work on her psychology as repeated failures at major events did take a toll on her confidence.

"Apart from the physical aspect, I always believe that a boxer needs to constantly work on the mental aspect because some defeats leave a scar in your mind, and it's important to forget them if you want to move ahead. I got to work on that with psychologist Vikram Mahajan," she said.

With her big triumph in Liverpool, she didn't just become the second girl from Bhiwani — after Nitu Ghangas — to become a world champion but also joined the elite list of women's Indian pugilists such as Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, who are seen as prominent medal prospects for upcoming big-ticket events. The 2028 Los Angeles Olympics is, of course, the pinnacle.

India go down fighting

Mooney ton trumps Mandhana heroics as Australia clinch series 2-1

NEW DELHI, PTI

Smriti Mandhana's heroics couldn't trump Beth Mooney's masterclass as Australia reinforced their dominance over India with a 43-run victory in the third women's ODI, clinching their 11th bilateral series against the hosts, here on Saturday.

Mooney's blistering 138 off 79 balls powered Australia to their joint-highest ODI total of 412 all out. It was also Australia's highest-ever total against India, surpassing their 371/8 in Brisbane. The Australian bowlers then held their nerve, weathering a 121-run stand between Mandhana (125 off 63 balls) and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (52 off 35 balls), and a late onslaught by Deepti Sharma (72 off 58 balls) to bowl out India for 369 and preserve their 100 per cent series win record by taking the three-match contest 2-1. Had India succeeded, they would have eclipsed the world record for the highest successful run chase which is currently held by Sri Lanka, who chased down 302 against South Africa in Potchefstroom in 2024. On a day when boundaries flowed freely, India conceded a staggering 60 fours and five sixes. In contrast, Australia allowed 39 fours and seven sixes in their defence, a gulf that ultimately proved decisive. India's fielding unit also floundered yet again with dropped chances and misfields, punctuated only by occasional flashes of brilliance like Deepti's one-handed return catch to get rid of Grace Harris.

Chasing a daunting 413, Mandhana blended elegance with belligerence to continue her dazzling form.

Brief scores: Australia: 412 all out in 47.5 overs (Alyssa Healy 30, Georgia Voll 81, Ellyse Perry 68, Beth Mooney 138, Ashleigh Gardner 39; Renuka Singh 2-79, Arundhati Reddy 3-86, Deepti Sharma 2-75) bt India: 369 all out in 47 overs (Smriti Mandhana 125, Harmanpreet Kaur 52, Deepti Sharma 72, Sneh Rana 35; Kim Garth 3-69, Megan Schutt 2-53). **Result:** Australia won by 43 runs.
Series: Australia win the series 2-1.
PoM: Beth Mooney.
PoS: Smriti Mandhana

Fastest tons in women's ODIs

Balls	By	Vs	Venue	Year
45	M Lanning (Aus)	NZ	Sydney (NSO)	2012
50	**S Mandhana (Ind)**	**Aus**	**Delhi**	**2025**
57	K Rolton (Aus)	SA	Lincoln	2000
57	B Mooney (Aus)	Ind	Delhi	2025
59	S Devine (NZ)	Ire	Dublin	2018

Australia's highest totals

Total	Vs.	Venue	Year
412/3	Denmark	Mumbai	1997
412	India	Delhi	2025
397/4	Pakistan	Melbourne	1997

Highest totals vs Australia

Total	By	Venue	Year
369	India	Delhi	2025
298-8	England	Hamilton	2022
292	India	New C'garh	2025

COMPILED BY ARUN GOPALAKRISHNAN

Wanyonyi holds off Sedjati for 800m gold; Chebet and Kipyegon make it 1-2 for Kenya in 5000m

TOKYO, AFP

Kenya's Olympic champion Emmanuel Wanyonyi added the world crown to his laurels with a hard-fought victory in the men's 800 metres on Saturday. Meanwhile, Olympic champion Beatrice Chebet produced a devastating burst of speed to edge Kenyan teammate Faith Kipyegon for victory in the women's 5000m and secure a world championships double gold

Wanyonyi timed a championship record of 1min 41.86sec for gold in Tokyo, just four-hundredths of a second ahead of Algeria's fast-finishing Djamel Sedjati. Defending champion Marco Arop of Canada had to settle for bronze in 1:41.95 in a reshuffle of the podium places with Sedjati from last year's Paris Olympics.

Ireland's Cian McPhillips, the first Irish athlete to run an 800m final at a world championships, was fourth in 1:42.15 as all eight athletes posted sub-1:43 times in a race of the highest quality.

In the women's 5000m, Chebet, who last weekend won the 10,000m, clocked 14min 54.36sec for victory, depriving Kipyegon of her own 1,500/5,000m double bid by 0.71sec. Nadia Battocletti earned a deserved bronze medal for Italy.

Meanwhile in the women's javelin final, Ecuador's Juleisy Angulo launched the javelin 65.12 metres with the second of her six attempts to clinch the gold. While Angulo set out her stall early, Anete Sietina of Latvia saved her best until last with a personal record of 64.64 on her final throw of the night to clinch silver. Australia's Mackenzie Little won a second successive world bronze medal through her opening throw of 63.58.

LEFT: Kenya's Emmanuel Wanyonyi finishes ahead of Algeria's Djamel Sedjati (left) and Canada's Marco Arop (centre) in a tight finish in the men's 800m final in Tokyo on Saturday. Kenya's Beatrice Chebet (left) celebrates with compatriot and silver medallist Faith Kipyegon after winning the 5000m final. AFP

Jamaica fumble baton

World 100 metres gold medallist Oblique Seville was deprived of a tilt at a golden double in Tokyo after a fumbled baton saw Jamaica fail to advance to the 4x100 metres relay final. Ackeem Blake handed off to Seville on the second leg, and the handover to Ryiem Forde on the third leg was slick.

But then came disaster as Forde's attempt to pass the baton on to anchor leg runner and world 100m silver medallist Kishane Thompson failed. South Africa and Britain will also miss out on the final on Sunday.

The eight teams that qualified are the highly-fancied United States, who did get the baton round safely, as well as Ghana, Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, Australia and France.

Results: Men: 800m: Emmanuel Wanyonyi (KEN) 1:41.86s, 1 (CR); Djamel Sedjati (ALG) 1:41.90, 2; Marco Arop (CAN) 1:41.95, 3. **20km race walk:** Caio Bonfim (BRA) 1:18:35s, 1; Zhaozhao Wang (CHN) 1:18:43, 2; Paul McGrath (ESP) 1:18:45, 3.
Women: 5000m: Beatrice Chebet (KEN) 14:54.36s, 1; Faith Kipyegon (KEN) 14:55.07, 2; Nadia Battocletti (ITA) 14:55.42, 3. **20km race walk:** Maria Perez (ESP) 1:25:54, 1; Alegna Gonzalez (MEX) 1:26:06, 2 (AR); Nanako Fujii (JPN) 1:26:18, 3. **Javelin throw:** Juleisy Angulo (ECU), 65.12m, 1; Anete Sietina (LAT) 64.64, 2; Mackenzie Little (AUS) 63.58, 3. **Shot put:** Jessica Schilder (NED) 20.29m, 1; Chase Jackson (USA) 20.21, 2; Maddison-Lee Wesche (NZ) 20.06, 3.

TOUGH TIMES Since Bhullar's win in an international event in Nov 2023, the male professionals have fluffed the lines

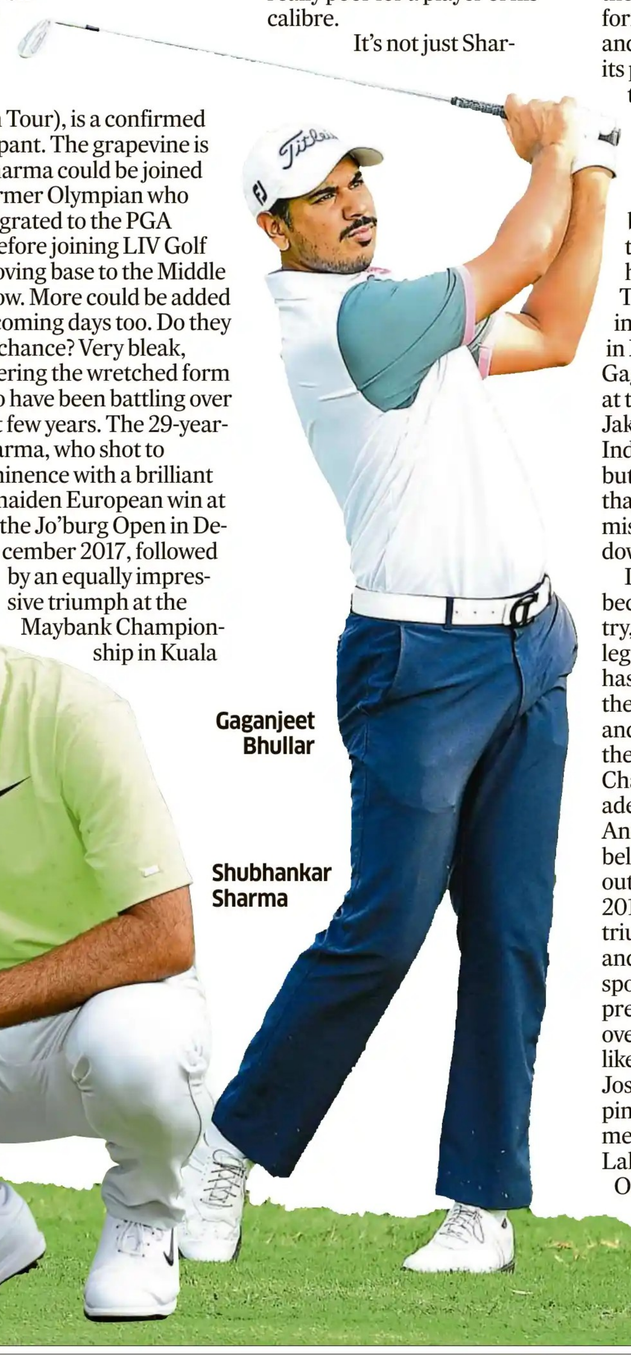
Men's golf in India stuck in the rough

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

In about a month's time, the hallowed Delhi Golf Club will be buzzing with activity. The majestic course, which has played host to multiple Indian Open championships and frequented by who is who of the country — from professional golfers to amateurs, from bureaucrats to socialites, from politicians to businessmen — will be staging the DP World India Championship from October 16-19.

Among the confirmed participants for the $4 million event, probably the richest the country has ever had, are five-time Major winner and favourite Rory McIlroy, two-time runner-up at Majors, Tommy Fleetwood, as well as Ryder Cup stars Viktor Hovland and Shane Lowry. Buzz is that tickets are already in good demand, and it's fair to assume golfing fans in India will be loosening their purse strings just to catch a glimpse of McIlroy, who completed his career Slam at the Augusta Masters earlier this year. Fair enough, because how often does one get to see the Northern Irishman, a bonafide global superstar, in action in India?

So what about the Indians? Well, as of now, only Shubhankar Sharma, a two-time winner on the DP World Tour (European Tour), is a confirmed participant. The grapevine is that Sharma could be joined by a former Olympian who had migrated to the PGA Tour before joining LIV Golf and moving base to the Middle East now. More could be added in the coming days too. Do they have a chance? Very bleak, considering the wretched form the duo have been battling over the last few years. The 29-year-old Sharma, who shot to prominence with a brilliant maiden European win at the Jo'burg Open in December 2017, followed by an equally impressive triumph at the Maybank Championship in Kuala Lumpur two months later, has struggled all season. In 23 tournaments, the unassuming golfer has missed the cut in a whopping 19 of them. That's really poor for a player of his calibre.



Gaganjeet Bhullar

Shubhankar Sharma

It's not just Sharma who is going through a horrendous run, but the Indian men's golf in totality has hit a rough with the future appearing not bright too. Yes, PGTI, the professional body with former India cricket captain and avid golfer Kapil Dev as its president, has increased the number of events and financial rewards. A new tour, the IGPL, has cropped up recently offering handsome returns, but the state of men's golf, in terms of performance, is not healthy at all at the moment.

The last time an Indian won internationally was way back in November 2023 when Gaganjeet Bhullar triumphed at the Indonesian Masters in Jakarta. The title drought for Indians is close to two years, but what's worrisome more than the lack of wins is the missed cuts and finishes way down the leaderboard.

It's completely mystifying because men's golf in the country, right from the days of the legendary Jeev Milkha Singh, has always had someone flying the flag high. Arjun Atwal and Jyoti Randhawa around the millennium, then SSP Chawrasia the following decade, followed by Bhullar and Anirban Lahiri, the conveyor belt moved on smoothly without much hiccups. In fact, in 2018, a whopping five Indians triumphed on the Asian Tour, and that time it looked like the sport had really taken off to its predicted heights. Talent was overflowing with youngsters like Viraj Madappa, Khalin Joshi and Rashid Khan stepping on the pedal to complement seasoned performers like Lahiri, Chawrasia and Bhullar.

Other youngsters like S Chikkarangappa, Ajeetesh Sandhu and Himmat Singh too were showing plenty of promise. Golf was indeed rocking!

So what has led to this collective snag? It's fine for a professional to go through his share of ups and downs — it's a part of an athlete's life — but why have all of them hit the rough at the same time?

"I have also been wondering and thinking about it for quite a while now," Lahiri, a seven-time Asian Tour and two-time European Tour winner, told DHoS. "With golf, there comes a wave; you have a wave of winners or a wave of, you know, Indians who do well. And even in the past, if you go back historically, there was a phase where Jeev, Jyoti and Arjun were the dominant forces and Shiv (Kapur) as well. Then there was this lull in the middle where nobody really won.

"And I think after that came probably the next batch of guys who have won prolifically. Gagan has won the most on the Asian tour. I won a few times, Himmat won once, SSP won a handful of times on the European tour. And then I think there was another gap. We had a few wins coming from Chirag (Kumar), Rashid, Khalin and then Shubhankar had a good run. I'm just hoping this lull doesn't stay very long."

Reputed coach Tarun Sardesai, who runs an eponymous academy at the Zion Hills Golf Club in Kolar, blamed the lack of grassroots work and foresight from the administrators, especially Indian Golf Union. "There is a white elephant in the room that no one's willing to address in this country, especially when it comes to golf. We have one person on the European tour, which is Shubhankar. We have Aditi on the LPGA. There is absolutely no developmental system in place. If you look at all the corporates today, hardly anyone is focusing on development. They're focusing on corporate golf. There's barely any focus on grassroots. Unless you develop and cultivate talent, how do you expect the sport to grow? Yes, there are plenty of professional and amateur tournaments, but what is the work done by the administrators or IGU at the grassroots to find the next generation? In my opinion, it's next to nothing."

Sardesai definitely has a point. One of the biggest challenges facing golf is accessibility. It's mostly played by kids of parents who have memberships at clubs or children of Armed Forces' officers.

Private clubs have sprung up, but playing and training there isn't a middle-class family's cup of tea. The lack of public courses, unlike the US or parts of Europe, is a massive deterrent for the common man. It's largely only the privileged who take up the sport and with the numbers not that big, the sport has sort of stagnated.

Who is going to snap this drought and kickstart another resurrection remains to be seen.

Anirban Lahiri

Nervy Liverpool edge Everton

Tottenham salvage a draw; Leeds take home three points

LIVERPOOL, AFP

Liverpool stretched their perfect Premier League start to maintain their stranglehold of the Merseyside derby with a 2-1 win over Everton and open up a six-point lead at the top of the table.

Goals from Ryan Gravenberch and Hugo Ekitike were the defending champions' reward for a dominant first half and enough for a fifth consecutive Premier League win.

But Liverpool ran out of steam after the break after Idrissa Gana Gueye fired Everton back.

Arne Slot's men had needed late goals to win all of their previous four Premier League games and Champions League opener against Atletico Madrid in midweek.

Salah came close to a second moments later with a powerfully struck effort that flew just wide.

Liverpool responded in style to a fine team move culminated in Ekitike rolling Gravenberch's pass through the legs of Jordan Pickford for his third goal in five Premier League games since his move from Eintracht Frankfurt.

But the second half was a completely different story as Liverpool almost saw another two-goal lead disappear after being pegged by Bournemouth, Newcastle and Atletico already this season.

Spurs rescue a point

Tottenham have started the season brightly under new manager Thomas Frank and rescued a point on the south coast.

Goals from Yankuba Minteh and Yasin Ayari gave Brighton a cushion before Richarlison pulled one back shortly before half-time and Jan Paul van Hecke's own goal made it all square.

Newly promoted Leeds recovered from conceding the first goal to beat Wolves 3-1, leaving the Midlands club without a single point from their five matches.

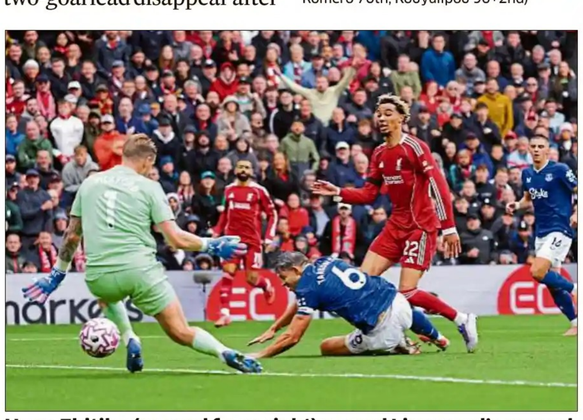
Tyrick Mitchell scored the winner for Palace at the London Stadium to lift the London club to fourth in the table, heaping the pressure on West Ham manager Graham Potter, while Burnley and Nottingham Forest shared a 1-1 draw.

Results: Liverpool: 2 (Gravenberch 10th, Ekitike 29th) bt Everton: 1 (Gueye 58th); Brighton: 2 (Minteh 8th, Ayari 31st) drew with Tottenham: 2 (Richarlison 43rd, Van Hecke 82nd - OG); Burnley: 1 (Anthony 20th) drew with Nottingham Forest: 1 (Williams 2nd); Wolves: 1 (Krejci 8th) lt to Leeds: 3 (Calvert-Lewin 31st, Stach 39th, Okafor 45th).

Mbappe on target

In-form striker Kylian Mbappe netted again as Real Madrid beat Espanyol 2-0 on Saturday to extend their lead at the top of La Liga, reports AFP from Madrid.

Results: Real Madrid: 2 (Militao 22nd, Mbappe 47th) bt Espanyol: 0, Girona: 0 lt to Levante: 4 (Eyong 43rd, Alvarez 49th, Romero 70th, Kouyalipou 90+2nd)



Hugo Ekitike (second from right) scored Liverpool's second goal against Everton to help his side maintain their perfect Premier League start on Saturday. REUTERS

BADMINTON CHINA MASTERS

Satwik-Chirag sail into final

Indian duo beats Malaysia's Chia-Soh in straight games

SHENZHEN (CHINA), PTI

Star Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stormed into their second successive men's doubles final with a clinical straight-game win over former world champions Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia at the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament here on Saturday.

Fresh from a World Championships bronze and a runner-up finish at the Hong Kong Open last week, the Asian Games champions outclassed their long-time nemesis Aaron and Soh 21-17, 21-14 in a dominating performance.

Satwik and Chirag came into the match with a 4-11 head-to-head record against the Malaysian duo, who are two-time Olympic medallists.

However, the Indians had recently got the better of Aaron and Soh en route to their bronze medal at the World Championships in Paris.

On Saturday, the Indians came out with an all-out attacking approach, backed by a solid defence, while also dominating the front court as the Malaysians — particularly Aaron — looked out of sorts during the 41-minute semifinal clash.

The opening game was a tight affair with both pairs fighting tooth and nail. Aaron and Soh grabbed a 10-7 lead with four straight points.

But three errors from Aaron — including a service fault — allowed Satwik and Chirag to claw back.

The Malaysians still held a slender one-point advantage at the interval.

At 14-13, Aaron faltered again at the net, handing the initiative back to the Indians. A flurry of smashes from Satwik and errors from their rivals took the Indians to 18-14.

A sharp return from Satwik gave them four game points and they sealed the opener on the second opportunity.

India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (front) and Chirag Shetty advanced to the China Masters Super 750 tournament final with a win over Malaysia's Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in Shenzhen on Saturday. AFP

In the second game, Satwik and Chirag raced to a 5-2 lead after the change of ends, with Satwik's smashes and Chirag's deft front-court play helping them stretch it to 8-2.

Though the Malaysians narrowed the gap to 6-8, the Indians went into the interval with 11-6 cushion. Aaron and Soh reduced it to 9-11, but the Indians responded with another surge to make it 15-9.

At 16-12, Satwik produced a thunderous smash followed by a lucky net cord, and the Malaysians' errors mounted.

Chirag applied the finishing touches with a deep return and a decisive smash to close out the contest.

Verstappen takes pole as Piastri, Leclerc crash

BAKU, AFP: Max Verstappen tip-toed through the hazards of a wild qualifying session featuring six red-flag stoppages on Saturday to claim pole position for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

As series leader Oscar Piastri crashed and his McLaren team-mate and title rival Lando Norris struggled for outright speed on his final lap, Red Bull's four-time champion made the most of treacherous damp conditions to end a near-crazy two-hour session on top.

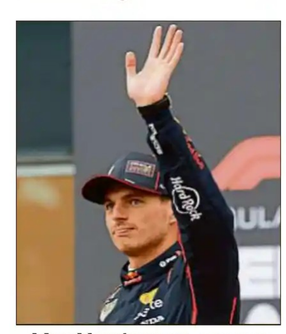
The Dutchman clocked a best lap in one minute and 41.117 seconds to finish 0.478 seconds ahead of Williams' Carlos Sainz and half a second clear of Racing Bulls' rookie Liam Lawson, who secured his best qualifying result.

Sainz had made the most of his opportunity in Q3 to go quickest before Ferrari's Charles Leclerc crashed to bring a sixth red-flag stoppage that wrecked his hopes of a fifth straight Baku pole — and deliver a mixed-up grid.

Mercedes' under-pressure rookie Kimi Antonelli and George Russell were fourth and fifth ahead of Yuki Tsunoda in the second Red Bull and Norris, who qualified seventh.

As Q1 began, Piastri was in the pits for a new front wing while his rivals hurried for an early banker lap, but as he started his first lap, a red flag halted the action when Alex Albon hit the barriers, leaving the Australian in danger of elimination.

After eight minutes' delay, Hamiton went top, Piastri took second, just two seconds before Sauber's Nico Hulkenberg hit the wall at Turn Four, triggering a second red flag.



Max Verstappen. REUTERS

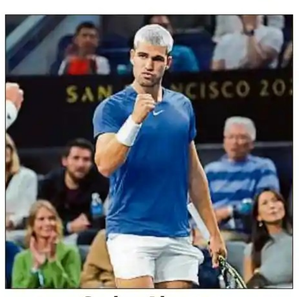
Europe lead Team World 3-1

SAN FRANCISCO, AFP

World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, fresh off his US Open triumph at Flushing Meadows, eased into the Laver Cup on Friday with a doubles victory that pushed Europe's lead to 3-1 over Team World after the opening day of the global tennis event.

Spain's Alcaraz and Czech Jakub Mensik defeated Team World's US duo of Taylor Fritz and Alex Michelsen 7-6 (9/7), 6-4 in the day's closing doubles.

It was Mensik's second victory of the day, after a 6-1, 6-7 (3/7) 10-8 singles victory over Michelsen.



Carlos Alcaraz

The Czech was broken as he served for the match in the ninth game of the second set. But after dropping the second-set tiebreaker to Michelsen he regrouped to win the 10-point match tiebreaker.

Swiatek advances

Iga Swiatek blazed into the Korea Open final after bad weather forced her to play two matches on Saturday, winning both in a combined time of two and a half hours.

The Polish six-time Grand Slam champion thrashed the Czech Republic's Barbora Krejcikova 6-0, 6-3 in a quarterfinal moved from Friday because of heavy rain, then returned to the court hours later to face Australia's Maya Joint.

World No. 2 Swiatek was just as clinical against her semifinal opponent, winning 6-0, 6-2 to move into her fifth final of the year.

Blemish-free round places Aditi in top-20

ROGERS (USA), PTI: India's Aditi Ashok **(in pic)** carded a bogey-free first round of five-under 66 to lie tied-18th at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship here.

Sarah Schmelzel and Minami Katsu shared the lead at the end of the first round after shooting rounds of eight-under 63 at the Pinnacle Country Club.

Teeing off on the front nine, Aditi started with two birdies and also made birdies on the 13th, 15th and 18th holes to take her birdie tally of the day to five. She was bogey free for the day.

Hitaashee, Pranavi in

Pranavi Urs and Hitaashee Bakshi were the only Indians to make the halfway cut at the La Sella Open in Spain, while Canadian teenager Anna Huang fired a bogey-free six-under 66 to move three shots clear at the top in Alicante.

Hitaashee added one-over 73 to her first round 72 and was now one-over for 36 holes and lying Tied-36th, while Pranavi (73-73) was Tied-47th.

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FOOTBALL KSFA SUPER DIVISION

ASC & CFC's easy win

BENGALURU, DHNS

Following Maitshaphang Neng Nong's first-half goal, Tongbram Krishna Kanta Singh and Oinam Gautham Singh netted one goal apiece in the second half to power ASC & Centre FC to a 3-0 win over Sporting Club Bengaluru at the KSFA Super Division League Championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium here on Saturday.

Maitshaphang opened the scoring in the 20th minute before Tongbram and Oinam scored in the 54th and 65th minutes respectively.

In the other games of the day, Bangalore City FC defeated Bharat Bengaluru FC 2-0 through goals from RS Jlcis (60th) and Mohak Muttalamani (82nd) while FC Real Bengaluru rode on the lone goal from Gaithailong Rongmei in the 89th minute to beat MFAR Students Union FC 1-0.

Results: Bangalore City FC: 2 (RS Jlcis 60th, Mohak Muttalamani 82nd) bt Bharat Bengaluru FC: 0; FC Real Bengaluru: 1 (Gaithailong Rongmei 89th) bt MFAR Students Union FC: 0; ASC & Centre FC: 3 (Maitshaphang Neng Nong 20th, Tongbram Krishna Kanta Singh 54th, Oinam Gautham Singh 65th) bt Sporting Club Bengaluru: 0.

Jomon Jacob (left) of Sporting Club Bengaluru and Viveksheel Hemrom of ASC Football Club tussle for possession during their KSFA Super Division League Championship game on Saturday. DH PHOTO/ BK JANARDHAN

Positano for Indian St Leger

PUNE SELECTIONS

Positano, from the stables of Suleiman Attaollahi and to be ridden by Akshay Kumar, is fancied to win the Indian St Leger, the feature event of the Pune races to be run over a distance of nine furlongs on Sunday.

First race starts at 12.20 pm

1. Caprisca Trophy -1600M: Northbound 1, Yuletide 2, Leo The Lion 3.
2. Noble Prince Trophy - 1200M: Flashman 1, Ariyan Star 2, Star Of Asia 3.
3. Mystic Memory Trophy - 1400M: Ksvya 1, Liam 2, Chardikala 3.
4. Amazing Grace Trophy - 1600M: Pride's Prince 1, Chagall 2, Singer Sargent 3.
5. Suraiya & Masoom Master Cup - 1200M: Social Butterfly 1, Aperol 2, Western Star 3.
6. Warsaw Pact Trophy (Div-II) - 1100M: Johnny Mac 1, Mojo 2, Lion King 3.
7. DCN Million - 1400M: Diego Garcia 1, Caradoc 2, Conjurer 3.
8. Indian St Leger - 2800M: Positano 1, Duke Of Tuscany 2, Thalassa 3.
9. Warsaw Pact Trophy (Div-I) - 1100M: Cindrella's Dream 1, Foujita 2, Abbicandra 3.
10. Bay Of Treasure Trophy - 1600M: Giant Gold 1, Marcus 2, Storm 3.
Day's best: Social Butterfly. **I jackpot**: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. **II jackpot**: 6, 7, 8,9 & 10. **I treble**: 4, 5 & 6. **II treble**: 7, 8 & 9. **II treble**: 8, 9 & 10.

D Minchu for day's plum

HYDERABAD SELECTIONS

Ananth Vatsalya-trained D Minchu, to be ridden by Ajeeth Kumar, appeals the most among seven runners in the fray for the PVG Raju Memorial Cup, the feature event of the races to be run over a distance of seven furlongs on Sunday.

First race starts at 1.05 pm

1. Major General Nawab Khusru Jung Bahadur Memorial Cup (Div-II) 1200M: Warwick 1, Sopranos 2, Rival 3.
2. Nawab Sultan Ali Khan Memorial Cup - 1400M: Certanity 1, Cherish The Lady 2, Authoritarian 3.
3. Raja Saheb Of Challapalli Memorial Cup - 1600M: Golden Bourbon 1, La Quinta 2, Real Thalaivaa 3.
4. PVG Raju Memorial Cup - 1400M: D Minchu 1, Hugh Capet 2, Detective 3.
5. SN Reddy Memorial Cup - 1400M: Cape May 1, Ilene 2, Exponent 3.
6. Major General Nawab Khusru Jung Bahadur Memorial Cup (Div-I) 1200M: Sangreal 1, Baisa 2, Shadow Baby 3.
7. Major General Nawab Khusru Jung Bahadur Memorial Cup (Div-III) 1200M: Romantic Grey 1, Pontefract 2, Bold Beauty 3.
Day's best: Certanity. **Jackpot**: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. **I treble**: 2, 3 & 4. **II treble**: 5, 6 & 7.

Shlok HC score narrow victory to be crowned champions

LOCAL HOCKEY

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a fiercely contested last pool match for the title, Shlok Hockey Club managed to overcome RWFSA by a whisker for a 5-4 victory to clinch the DS Murthy memorial hockey tournament here on Saturday.

Results: Falcon HC: 3 (Rajdeep 22nd, Shaan Devaiah 33rd, John Bosco 45th) drew with Delhi Public School: 3 (Saurabh Mahesh 7th, 12th, Abbas 38th); Shlok HC: 5 (Yeshwanth 20th, 29th, Lovekumar Kanogiyes 53rd, Md Ziad 48th, 54th) bt RWFSA: 4 (Deekshith 10th, 26th, 58th, Mokshith 14th).

Final standings: Winners: Shlok HC; **Runners-up:** RWFSA.

Special awards: Best Goalkeeper: Chakra (Falcon HC); **Best Defender:** Deekshith (RWFSA); **Best Midfielder:** Lovekumar Kanogiyes (Shlok HC); **Best Forward:** Mohd Zaid (Shlok HC); **Top Goal Scorer:** Deekshith (RWFSA); **Player of the Tournament:** Dhanush (RWFSA).

Motocross C'ship returns

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Indian National Motocross Championship returned to Bengaluru after nearly two decades, drawing a record number of entries for its opening round at Tribal Adventure Cafe near Devanahalli, here on Saturday.

A total of 51 riders have registered across multiple classes, representing top teams such as Petronas TVS Racing, CR2 Racing, Gas Gas and VM Motorsports Foundation.

City's Arjun tops podium

BENGALURU, DHNS

Pune's Arjun Chheda and Bengaluru's Arjun S Nair notched up fluent wins in the MRF Formula 2000 and Formula 1600 categories, respectively, to set the tone for the second round of the MMSC FMSCI Indian National Car Racing Championship at the Madras International Circuit in Chennai on Saturday.

The 20-year-old Nair scored a fine win after pole-sitter Sai Shiva Makesh Sankaran (Pune) retired after the first lap with Mumbai's Zahan Commissariat finishing second ahead of Gyan S (Chennai).

Arjun S Nair

Antony-ridden Misty wins Scruples Cup

KOLKATA RESULTS

Aashay Doctor-trained Misty, ridden by Antony Raj, won the Scruples Cup, the feature event of the Kolkata races on Saturday.

1. Star Of Italy Handicap - 1600M: Global Fashion (Joydeep Datta Gupta) Antony Raj 1; Aretha (Imran Chisty) 2; Mahlagha (Aleemuddin) 3; Amalfitana (Vishal Bunde) 4; Wb: 2, 6-1/2, 2-1/2L. T: 1-43.84. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Global Fashion.
2. Best Of The Blues Handicap -1200M: Swift Lady (Mrs G Alford) Imran Chisty 1; Jean Lafette (Antony Raj) 2; Diamond Gold (Azaruddin) 3; Happy Morning (Md Imran) 4; Wb: 3/4, 1-3/4, 2-1/2L. T: 1-15.16. TB: Rutherford Alford. Fav: Swift Lady.
3 Nightjar Handicap (Div-I) - 1100M: City Of Joy (Faiz Adam) Vishal Bunde 1; KIndred Spirit (Ankush) 2; Dance Along (Aleemuddin) 3; Cashalaika (Nikhil Naidu) 4; Wb: Nk, 1-1/4, 1-1/2L. T: 1-07.35. TB: Sabeel Shariff. Fav: City Of Joy.
4. Nightjar Handicap (Div-II) - 1100M: Bundle Of Charm (Faiz Adam) Vishal Bunde 1; Oishika (RS Bhati) 2; Chillilady (Nikhil Naidu) 3; Winsangel (Imran Chisty) 4; Not Run: Extravagant Star. Wb: Nk, 2-1/2, 5L. T: 1-07.76. TB: Sabeel Shariff. Fav: Oishika.
5. Quincy Handicap - 1400M: Victorious Omen (Chirag Shah) Imran Chisty 1; Sporting Trainer (JH Arul) 2; Tres Bien (RS Bhati) 3; Sky Hawk (Vishal Bunde) 4; Wb: 3-1/4, Dist, Shd,. T: 1-27.82. TB: S.Waheed. Fav: victorious Omen.
6. Scruples Cup - 1200M: Misty (Farouq Rattonsey) Antony Raj 1; Mathangi (JH Arul) 2; Roman Spirit (Neeraj Rawal) 3; Outlander (Imran Chisty) 4; Wb: Lnk, 6, 1-1/4L. T: 1-13.42. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Misty.
7. Vanitas Handicap - 2000M: Good Deeds (Cyrus Poonawalla) Aleemuddin 1; Jahzara (Vaibhav) 2; Champagnesupernova (Hasib Alam) 3; Sea Eagle (Neeraj Rawal) 4; Wb: Hd, Hd, 4L. T: 2-09.81. TB: Rajesh Narredu. Fav: Sea Eagle.

Bangalore Dividends: I race: Rs 11w; 10, 18p; Fc: Rs 21; Q: Rs 41; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 23; Tri: Rs 86 & 32;
II race: Rs 17w; Rs 10, 13, 23p; Fc: Rs 25; Q: Rs 18; Shp: Rs 23; Thp: Rs 46; Tri: Rs 130 & 90; Ex: Rs 431 & 243.
III race: Rs 16w; 10, 12, 17p; Fc: Rs 40; Q: Rs 35; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 34; Tri: Rs 78 & 62; Ex: Rs 1,288 & 2,002.
IV race: Rs 60w; 14, 11, 18p; Fc: Rs 141; Q: Rs 77; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs 35; Tri: Rs 543 & 286. Ex: Rs 666 & 290.
V race: Rs 17w; 10, 12, 29p; Fc: Rs 117; Q: Rs 53; Shp: Rs 45; Thp: Rs 115; Tri: Rs 807 & 403; Ex: Rs 490 & 210..
VI race: Rs 25w; 12, 28, 14p; Fc: Rs 201; Q: Rs 112; Shp: Rs 75; Thp: Rs 40; Tri: Rs 364 & 181; Ex: Rs 1,886 & 1,293.
VII race: Rs 36w; 21, 30p; Fc: Rs 207; Q: Rs 73; Shp: Rs 34; Thp: Rs 49; Tri: Rs 414 & 183; Ex: Rs 342 & 112.
Jackpot: Rs 3,194 (85). **Runner-up**: Rs 231 (504). **I treble**: Rs 281 (21). **II treble**: Rs 140 (104).

Note: Due to incessant rains, rendering race track not conducive for racing, stewards of Madras Race Club have decided postpone Saturday's (Sept 20th) races to Monday. Same race card holds good.

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FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs.JANAKI PRASAD
25.05.1942 - 03.10.2024
Retd. Asst.Accounts Officer, AG's Office
Shubham on 23.09.2025
at HSR Layout
9845539761 / 9845355273

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾ ನಿರ್ದೇಶನಾಲಯ,
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾ ಘಟಕ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.
e-Mail: dcpudvg11@gmail.com, Ph: 08192-222701

ಪೋಷಕರ ಪತ್ತೆಗಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಹರಿಹರ ನಗರ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಲೇ॥ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀ ಗಂಡ ಉರುಗಪ್ಪ, ವಯಸ್ಸು ಸುಮಾರು 40 ವರ್ಷಯಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಇವರು ತನ್ನ ಮಕ್ಕಳಾದ 1) ಶ್ವೇತ (11 ವರ್ಷ), 2) ಅಕ್ಕಮ್ಮ (8 ವರ್ಷ), 3) ಚಂದ್ರಶೇಖರ (6 ವರ್ಷ) ಇವರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಜಾಹಿರ ಬಾದ್ ನಗರ, ಸಂಗಾರೆಡ್ಡಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ತೆಲಂಗಾಣ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಿಕ್ಷಾಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿದ್ದು ದಿನಾಂಕ: 20.11.2021 ರಂದು ರಕ್ಷಿಸಿ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ, ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮಹಿಳಾ ನಿಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾಲನೆ ಮತ್ತು ರಕ್ಷಣೆಗಾಗಿ ವರ್ಗಾವಣೆ ಮಾಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಈಗಿರುವಾಗ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 30.10.2022 ರಂದು ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀಯವರು ದಾವಣಗೆರೆಯ ಚಿಗಟೇರಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅನಾರೋಗ್ಯದಿಂದ ಮರಣ ಹೊಂದಿದ್ದು, ಸದರಿಯವರ ಗಂಡ ಹಾಗೂ ಹತ್ತಿರದ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಕರ ವಿಳಾಸ ಪತ್ತೆಯಾಗಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ಸದರಿಯವರ ಈ ಮೂರು ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನು ಬಾಲನ್ಯಾಯ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ ಅನುಸಾರ ದತ್ತು ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಗೆ ಒಳಪಡಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿದ್ದು ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗೊಂಡ 120 ದಿನಗಳ ಒಳಗಾಗಿ ಸದರಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ತಂದೆ/ಹತ್ತಿರದ ರಕ್ತ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಗಳು ಮೂಲ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಜೆ.ಹೆಚ್ ಪಟೇಲ್ ಬಡಾವಣೆ, ಶಾಮನೂರು ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192-222701 ಅಥವಾ ವಿಶೇಷ ದತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಅಮೂಲ್ಯ(ಜಿ) ಘಟಕ-1, ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ನಗರ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ, ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192-262990 ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಲು ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಇವರು ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಿಳಿಸಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಜೈವಿಕ ತಂದೆ-ತಾಯಿಯವರ ಪತ್ತೆಗಾಗಿ

ಮಗುವಿನ ಹೆಸರು: ನವಜಾತ ಹೆಣ್ಣು ಶಿಶು (ಲತಿಕ). ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹೋದಾಗ ಇದ್ದಂತಹ ವಯಸ್ಸು: 01 ದಿನ ಶಿಶು. ಮಗು ದೊರೆತ ಸ್ಥಳ: ಸೂರ್ಯೋದಯ (ಹಾಸ್ಪಿಟಲ್) ಪೆವಿಲಿಯನ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಪಿ.ಜೆ ಬಡಾವಣೆ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ. ಶಿಶು ದೊರೆತ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 20.09.2024. ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ತಂದೆ-ತಾಯಿಯರ ಹೆಸರು: ತಾಯಿ ಸುಮಿಯಾ ಅಂಜುಮ್, ತಂದೆ ಬಾಷಾ ಹಿರಿಯಾರು, ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಬಣ್ಣ: ಬಿಳಿ ಬಣ್ಣ. ಶಿಶುವಿನ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ: ಉತ್ತಮವಾಗಿದೆ.
ಸದರಿ ಶಿಶುವಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಜೈವಿಕ ಪೋಷಕರು ಮುಂದಿನ 60 ದಿನಗಳ ಒಳಗೆ ಸೂಕ್ತ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ವಿಳಾಸ: ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಜೆ.ಹೆಚ್ ಪಟೇಲ್ ಬಡಾವಣೆ, ಶಾಮನೂರು ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192-222701 ಅಥವಾ ವಿಶೇಷ ದತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಅಮೂಲ್ಯ (ಜಿ) ಘಟಕ-1, ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ನಗರ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ, ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192-262990/ಮಹಿಳಾ ಪೊಲೀಸ್ ಠಾಣೆ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.
ಸಹಿ/- ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು,
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾ ಘಟಕ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

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Scrapped vehicles and materials of different types available at all the divisions and Regional Workshop, Hubballi of NWKRTC will be sold through **MSTC** e-Auction platform. The e-auction of the scrapped vehicles for the **RVSF** registered bidders only will be held on **6th of October-2025** and scrapped materials will be held on **8th and 9th of October-2025.**
Interested bidders may log on to **www.mstcecommerce.com** for further details and registration. They may contact NWKRTC Contact Nos. **7022009113 or 7760988557** for any clarifications.
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Sd/-Controller of Stores & Purchases,

MYSORE MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE, MYSORE
(An Autonomous Institute of Government of Karnataka)
Irwin Road, Mysore-570001, Phone No. :+91-0821-2520512 (Off.), 2520803 (Fax)
Website: www.mmcri.karnataka.gov.in/, E-mail: mmcrimysore@yahoo.com
No. SUP/CR/66/2025-26 Date : 06.09.2025
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
Sub : Invitation of Short Term Tender for the Monoclonal Antibody (MAB) to the K.R. Hospital of Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Mysuru.
The Tender has been invited as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements Act 1999 for the supply of Monoclonal Antibody (MAB) for the period of one year to the K.R. Hospital which is associated hospital of Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Mysuru. The Tender documents may be downloaded from E-procurement website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** from **20.09.2025** and last date for submission of Tenders through E-procurement website is **04.10.2025 upto 5.00 PM.** Those tenders which are not submitted with E.M.D. will be rejected. If, the last date for submission of Tender treated as holiday, the next working day will be considered as last date. No Notification in this regard will be announced.
Sd/- Director and Dean
Mysore Medical College & Research Institute, Mysore
DIPR/MYSORE/SHIRDISAI/990/2025-26

Tumakuru City Corporation, Tumakuru
Website: www.tumakurucity.mrc.gov.in
Phone No:2278480, Fax: 2275106 e-mail : itstaff_ulb_tumkur@yahoo.com Grievance: 0816-2272200, 2271200
No:TCC/Engineer Section/Civil/CR/13/2025-26
DATED: 18.09.2025
Tender Notification
The Executive Engineer, Tumakuru City Corporation, Tumakuru invites tenders as per the KTPP act 1999-2000 through KPPP portal for Corporation Grant work for Sl No 1, 2 30days, Sl No, 3,4,5 15days. tenders Eligible Contractors with PWD License certificate can Participate in the Tender.
Contractors can download and submit the tenders through KPPP portal https/kppp.karnataka.gov.in Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Processing Fee shall also be paid electronically.
Calendar of Events and other information are as follows:
1. Date of reciept of Tenders : 18-09-2025. 2. Last Date for Submission of Tenders: 17-10-2025 at 4.30 pm. 3. Pre-Bid Meeting : 24-09-2025 at 11.30am. 4. Date of Opening of Tenders (Technical Bids): 18-10-2025 at 4.40 pm. 5. Date of Opening of Tenders (Financial Bids): 21-10-2025 at 4.45pm. Post ponement of calendar of events (if any) is only through KPPP portal and will not be published in newspapers.
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Tumakur City Corporation Tumakuru
DIPR/TUM/306/KSMCA/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
Govt of Karnataka
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ - 587103
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, BAGALKOTE- 587103
Ph: 08354-235091 E-mail: dudc_bgk@yahoo.co.in, Itstaff dudc_bagalkote@yahoo.co.in
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಜಿನಕೋಬಾ: ನಗರೋತ್ಥಾನ ಹಂತ-4:2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:19.09.2025.
ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
E-Proceurement portal ಮುಖಾಂತರ
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಅದ್ಯಾದೇಶ 1999, ನಿಯಮಾವಳಿಗಳು 2000 ರಂತೆ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬರುವ ಮಾನ್ಯ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳ ಅಮೃತ ನಗರೋತ್ಥಾನ ಹಂತ-4 ಹಾಗೂ ಇತರೆ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ e-protal:https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರನಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಇತರೆ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿಗಳು ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ತಿಳಿಸಲಾಗುವದು, ಯಾವುದೇ ದಿನ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವದಿಲ್ಲ.
ಇಂಡೆಂಟ ನಂ :
1) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT45854/CALL-2, 2) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT45907/CALL-2, 3) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT41750/CALL-2, 4) DMA/2024-25/BD/WORK_INDENT37686/CALL-2, 5) DMA/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT49198
ಸೂಚನೆಗಳು:
(1) Pre-bid Meeting Date 24.09.2025 at 1.30pm
(2)Last Date & Time for receip t of tenders 29.09.2025 at 04.00 pm.
(3) Opening of Technical bid is on Dtd : 03.10.2025 at11.00 am
(4) Date & Time for Opening of Financial Bid Dtd:10.10.2025 at 11.00 am.
ಸಹಿ/-ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಕೋಶ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ.
DIPR/BGK/RO-NO-291/KSMCA/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ, ಇಲಾಖೆ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮಂಡ್ಯ
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್‌ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ
ಸಂ: 07/2025-2026 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 19-09-2025
ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ವಿವಿಧ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ಐಟಂವಾರುದರದ ಟೆಂಡರುಗಳಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಹಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ KW-1,2 3 & 4 ರರೀತಿ ದ್ವಿಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.ಅರ್ಹಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್https://kppp.karnataka. gov.in ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಾಗಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು.
[ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ. 1 ರಿಂದ 16 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ]
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ 20.09.2025 ರಿಂದ ಇ-ಪೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿಚಾರಣೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ29.09.2025ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲುಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ 29.09.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4.30ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ 30.09.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 5.00ಘಂಟೆ ನಂತರ, ಅಥವಾ ನಂತರದ ಕೆಲಸದ ದಿನಗಳು.
[ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ. 17ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ]
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ 20.09.2025 ರಿಂದ ಇ-ಪೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪೂರ್ವಭಾವಿ ಸಭೆಯುನ್ನು ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ರವರಕಛೇರಿ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ವಿಭಾಗ ಮಂಡ್ಯ, ರವರಕಛೇರಿಯುಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 06.10.2025ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11-00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿಚಾರಣೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ 08.10.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲುಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ 09.10.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4.30ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ 10.10.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 5.00ಘಂಟೆ ನಂತರ, ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ 13.10.2025 ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ನಂತರದ ಕೆಲಸದ ದಿನಗಳು.
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆ ಬೆಲೆ ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ರಂತೆ. ಕಾಲಮಿತಿ: ಮಳೆಗಾಲ ಸೇರಿ4/12 ತಿಂಗಳು, ಒಟ್ಟು 16 (ಹದಿನಾರು), ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಪೈಕಿ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.200.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ರೂ.6.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ಬೆಲೆ ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ರಂತೆ, ಕೆಲಸಗಳ ವಿವರ, ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ., ಮೊತ್ತ ಮುಂತಾದ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸದರಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.
ಟಿಪ್ಪಣಿ:
1. ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವವರು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯ ಮುಂದೂಡುವಿಕೆ /ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ರದ್ದುಗೊಳಿಸುವ/ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನಿರಾಕರಿಸುವ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.
2. ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಕಾರಣಗಳಿಂದ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳು/ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿಗಳು ಉಂಟಾದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ, ಬದಲಾಗಿ ವಿದ್ಯುನ್ಮಾನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ವೇದಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.
ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾ.ಇಂ.,ಲೋ.ಇ.,ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮಂಡ್ಯ

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SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)
KPTCL invites Bids on electronic mode for the following works against following Enquiry Numbers:
No. CGM(Tech)/DGM(PROC & APCC)/EE-(Proc)-4/AEE-5/2025-26/3236-252 Dt: 20.09.2025
Enquiry Numbers / Name of the works
1) KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT2446/CALL-2
Combined Package: Work-A) Replacement of 2x12.5MVA, 66/11 KV Power Transformer by 2x20MVA, 66/11 KV Power Transformer at 66/11KV MUSS UP Halli, in H.B. Halli Taluk, Vijayanagara District.
Work-B) Providing additional 1X20MVA, 66/11kV Power Transformer at 220/66/11KV Neelagunda sub-station in Harappanahalli Taluk, Vijayanagara Dist., on **Partial Turnkey basis** including Supply of all Materials/ equipments, Erection (Including dismantling and Civil Works) of all materials/ equipments, Testing and Commissioning.
No. CGM(Tech)/DGM(PROC & APCC)/EE-(Proc)/AEE-6/2025-26/3218-234 Dt: 20.09.2025
2) KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT2782
Work for Restoration of collapsed tower no.6 at the middle of HDMC garbage dump yard of existing **220kV SRS Hubballi - Narendra DC line** and Heightening of line between Tower no.5 to 7 to maintain the safe ground clearance at HDMC garbage dump yard in Hubballi Taluk ,Dharwad district on **Total Turnkey Basis** including Supply of all Materials/ equipments, Erection (Including Civil and dismantling Works) of all materials/equipments, Testing and Commissioning.
The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the E-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **"E Procurement KPTCL" or https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 22.09.2025 at 15:00 hrs.** Last date & time for receipt of Bids is **03.10.2025 at 15:00 hrs. Any extension of due date for Bid submission will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal**. Any details required in this regard can also be had from the Office of the undersigned during Office hours.
All Corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the Bids.
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PERSONAL

Change of Name

I, A.SENBAGAALLI residing at No.P-3/2, Akash Vihar, Airforce Camp, Marathalli, Bangalore-560037 have chagned my minor daughter's name from S.V SEEMA HASINI to V. SEEMA HASINI vide affidavit dated 18/09/2025 sworn before notary Jalandhara, Bangalore

I, HARSHIKA NARESH KAPOOR resident of Flat No.306, 3rd Floor, Hoysala Dreamz, Seenappa Layout, New BEL Road, Bangalore-560094 have changed my name to HARSHIKA KAPOOR vide affidavit dated 20/09/2025 sworn before notary Ambika.S, Bangalore

THE Z FACTOR

We are building a generation of yes-men

Mohamed Zeeshan
is a student of all things global and, self-confessedly, master of none, notwithstanding his Columbia Master's, a stint with the UN and with monarchs in the Middle East
@ZeeMohamed_

As a millennial, I'm a product of the internet age.

For many of us millennials, coming of age amid the social media revolution, it felt like the barriers of entry into public discourse were collapsing. In the olden days, competition for limited space in newspapers meant that few writers could build audiences or be heard. Information was scarce and inaccessible, requiring hours of toil in physical libraries to find answers to basic questions.

In the Internet age, all these constraints suddenly disappeared. With the aid of online blogs and tweets, any writer anywhere could easily broadcast their views to the rest of the world, sometimes reaching millions of readers, and even presidents, prime ministers, and policymakers. Information became readily available at the touch of a button. Perhaps just as importantly, distant people around the world could mobilise based on shared beliefs.

The political impact of these trends became almost immediately tangible. Through the late 2000s and early 2010s, the world saw a proliferation of democratic protests and movements, as young people everywhere clamoured for freedom and fairness. It happened in the United States, where the Occupy Wall Street protests followed the Great Recession. In India, anti-corruption protestors marched through New Delhi after a wave of scandals. It even happened in the Middle East, where the Arab Spring quickly toppled longstanding autocrats across Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia.

In 2011, *Time* magazine captured this universal march for liberation by naming a faceless protester its Person of the Year and hailing their use of technology to connect across geographies. "This year," *Time* wrote, "instead of plugging in the headphones, entering an Internet-induced fugue state and quietly giving in to hopelessness, [the protestors] used the Internet to find one another and take to the streets." But in celebrating the connectivity induced by social media, what we missed was the disconnection it equally wrought.

In the pre-Internet age, public debate and discourse may have been restricted to a tiny, educated elite. But those who did partake in debate were also forced to engage with opinions that flew against their own. Village elders in the public square and senators in parliament had to establish their following by arguing against the substance of opposing views. Media outlets were limited in number and covered all sides of the debate in their reportage.

The social media age expanded the public square by giving more people a platform. But it also created ideological silos and echo chambers. Instead of a large, noisy public square where a plethora of ideas and opinions mingled freely, social media allowed people to form isolated rooms full of folks like themselves. Contrarian thinkers were often publicly humiliated and then expelled, until they too found a room full of like-minded people.

In more recent years, entire social media platforms have become echo chambers. As ideologues get banned on various platforms, they have gone on to form new ideologically sanitised platforms of their own. Democratic populism has validated these impulses: When an ideology gains sizeable support from the voters, it declares itself supreme and considers debate unnecessary (because, electorally, it is).

This treatment of public discourse – like a game of football – has formed sharp divides within and between countries. Commentators, analysts, and even the common citizenry now fall into neat boxes, each filled with people holding the same predictable views on nearly every topic. There can now be few patriots criticising the government, few rebels agreeing with it, and few hawks arguing against war or for peace.

This polarisation has several perverse consequences. For one, when an ideology is in power, it is liable to govern poorly since it faces little internal dissent. Even in democracies with robust State institutions, electoral success for any one party can have damaging results, as contrarian ideas are violently suppressed.

Second, as people adopt uncompromising positions, common ground between different parties and ideological groups rapidly vanishes. When ideological groups are so neatly defined, leaders who dissent with their party on any issue become traitors. That not only discourages dissent – it also reinforces the idea that rival parties are enemies since dialogue is not possible.

To be sure, finding your echo chamber on the internet is a great feeling. It's far more pleasant to be surrounded by people who share your views, anger or biases than to argue and debate. But the truth is that in large nations, millions of people will never truly agree on most things, so different ideologies must debate, compromise, and find a middle line.

Social media might be giving us a voice for our views, but it is paradoxically also building a generation of yes-men.

ROVING REFLECTIONS

India in the crosswinds

Nirupama Rao, the former Ambassador to China and the US, has called India's equations with the US, China, and Russia "a three-body problem". The three-body problem refers to the difficulty in calculating the motions of three celestial bodies moving on the gravitational forces they exert on each other. In the n-body problem, this prediction becomes harder because it involves thousands of celestial bodies interacting with each other gravitationally. India, at present, is in a similar situation, caught in a web of multiple powerful forces – the US, Russia, European nations, China, and Pakistan. Its neighbourhood remains unstable, with the latest wave of unrest hitting Nepal. Meanwhile, India grapples with its own social turmoil, marked by inequities and caste assertions. How should it address these intractable problems?

Most would trace the chaos of the present world order to Donald Trump. The US president has been a disruptor with the designs of a classic authoritarian who detests diversity and multiculturalism. The trade war he unleashed has pushed economies across the world to uncertainty and threatened domestic damage in the US. India, in particular, has been singled out for punitive tariffs and humiliation. While calling Narendra Modi his "good friend", Trump has continued to engage with Pakistan. India has been targeted for being a "laundromat" for Russian oil and, in effect, funding Russia's war against Ukraine. China, which initially faced the tariff heat, has since found favourable treatment by Trump.

It can be argued that the present dispensation in India has broken away from a tradition of caution in its handling of the China situation, as seen in its engagement in forums such as the Quad. India has shown intent in checking Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific. Has the policy shift been effective? The jury is still out. Meanwhile, China's continuous support to Russia, increasingly isolated over the war, marks an important geopolitical turn, setting the stage for new regional alliances, with India emerging as the unlikely third power.

Capt G R Gopinath (Retd.)
builds bridges, sometimes by tearing down walls. He is a soldier, farmer, and entrepreneur

Nehru's policy of non-alignment was effective and steered India through tough times. These are different times that call for new strategies to navigate an evolving multipolar order. Even for countries that had a sense of what to expect from Trump, the chaos that ensued has been a jolt. Modi and S Jaishankar are not the only ones who have been caught unaware – some of the US's traditional allies and trading partners in the Americas, Europe, and Asia have found themselves in Trump's crosshairs. While countries such as Mexico and Canada have stood up in defiance, some in Europe have tried to placate Trump – the bottom line is that none have been able to read the president.

Trump, however, has found his match in the inscrutable Vladimir Putin, an authoritarian, ruthless leader who can keep even the US president guessing on his next move. There is a parallel here – both the leaders claim to be driven to make their countries great *again.*

So, where does this interplay of powers leave India, considering that Trump, unlike his predecessors, looks at India as China's backyard, and not necessarily as a country with strong democratic credentials, a counterpoint to the belligerent China?

Even with all its internal strife and political friction, India is a rising economic power and a leader among robust democracies. We cannot lose our bearings and must use our stature to influence and mobilise international opinion against nations that use military force to extend territorial and political ambition. India's strength is still in its moral core, which makes it an important voice in a fractious world. The words of Napoleon Bonaparte are relevant – "There are only two forces in the world, the sword and the spirit. In the long run, the sword will always be conquered by the spirit."

Modi enjoys massive popularity – he can do without modelling himself on the lines of strongmen such as Trump, Putin, or Xi. As the Prime Minister, he must prioritise strengthening India's democratic core, disown divisive forces, and take the lead in uniting disparate elements. Stronger institutions will gain us the moral high ground and the stature to show the way to the world. We can still resist and reform – in true Gandhian way – and make a difference.

ILLUSIONS AND DELUSIONS

A policy pill for the pharma sector

India's pharmaceutical sector is one of our most compelling manufacturing success stories. In a country not typically seen as a manufacturing hub, pharma stands out – with over 700 US FDA-approved units (the highest outside the US and steadily growing at 5%), and exports crossing $27 billion at 8% annual growth. We are the third-largest producer by volume (yet only 13th by value), supplying nearly 60% of global vaccines and 20% of generics. However, we must not take our past successes for granted in a world increasingly reshaped by trade conflicts and forced supply chain realignments. We need, therefore, to go beyond the initial optics. Strategic policy modifications are essential.

The global pharma market is valued at $1.6 trillion, with exports accounting for $835 billion. Germany ($119 billion), Switzerland ($99 billion), and the US ($90 billion) dominate this space. Formulations – patented and generics – make up 70% of trade, APIs and bulk drugs about 20%, and vaccines around 7%. India is a global force, but our value-based market share remains modest. China's pharma trajectory is instructive: from a 1% share in 2003 to over $50 billion in export revenues today.

Our vaccine story illustrates both promise and vulnerability. The global vaccine market, estimated at $87.75 billion in 2024, is projected to reach $151.96 billion by 2033. India is the second-largest vaccine exporter by volume (24.7%) but contributes just 2% by value. This stems from our focus on low-income countries (LICs), which source 80% of their vaccines from India. While we have 21 globally competitive institutions, most firms operate as licencees or focus on off-patent vaccines. In contrast, the EU27 bloc dominates both volume (44%) and value (60.3%), supplying 60% of vaccines to high-income countries (HICs). The US, though smaller in volume, contributes 22% of the global vaccine export value. Indian firms have yet to enter the higher-yield spaces.

In formulations, India leads the global generics market by volume (20%) but captures only 5% by value. Generics, while widely prescribed, account for a smaller share of total drug costs. Illustratively, in the US, they represent 90% of prescriptions but only 13.1% of drug spending. Despite our dominance in volume, Indian companies have, as in vaccines, not moved up the value chain.

TCA Ranganathan
The former chairman of the Export Import Bank of India is a banker with a theory of everything
@tcartca

The global market size of the API and bulk drug segment was $239.18 billion in 2024. India ranks third, with an 8% share and a growth rate of 8.3%. We supply 57% of WHO-prequalified APIs. Yet, we remain deeply dependent on China for 70-90% of our requirements in over 60 critical APIs. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, announced to reduce this dependency, has seemingly underperformed, perhaps reflecting a reluctance of our corporates.

These reluctances/inhibitions may be happening because of our structural dispersion. India's pharma manufacturing ecosystem includes over 3,000 formulation producers and 10,500 production units across 118 clusters in 19 states. However, just 10 companies account for a third of the domestic market, and only 300-350 have significant national or export scale. In contrast, countries like Switzerland, Germany, and China have significantly fewer but individually much larger clusters, often located near research-oriented universities. Our clusters thus lack the ecosystem externalities needed to support innovation and scale. As a result, R&D spending in Indian pharma remains minuscule compared to global peers. Even our most celebrated firms lag in innovation. Most firms are small, undercapitalised, and lack access to quality infrastructure. Project costs remain among the highest globally, as few units benefit from shared public facilities: power, warehousing, transport, housing, and environmental management. China, by contrast, even offers industrial land on 40-year leases.

So, what needs to change? Attempting a shift from volume-centric to value-driven exports will require incentivising innovation, patent filings, and high-value formulations. This needs a willingness from policymakers to actively seek out the 'real asks' of industry, not just presuppose the schemes. Also, overcoming the current academia-industry disconnect, our structural weakness, will require seeking out the 'real asks' of academia as well.

We need to reduce API import dependency through aggressive support for domestic production by strengthening the existing PLI schemes by providing land and globally competitive infrastructure via lease-based schemes to reduce promoter risks. Shared facilities should meet global standards, and clusters must be integrated with research institutions to foster innovation. Alongside, policy execution must be time-bound, transparent, and publicly tracked.

India's pharma sector has the potential to be not just the pharmacy of the world, but its innovation engine. But to get there, we must confront our structural weaknesses head-on. The world is watching, and so are our competitors.

THE LIVING STREAM

The illustrious Kareem Khan

During a famine, a stingy village headman fears people showing up at his house to seek alms. He asks his wife to tell them that he had died and send them away. This unusual episode appears in a song collected in rural Karnataka somewhere by the folklorist and poet, SK Kareem Khan.

Born in Sakleshpur in 1910, Kareem Khan was the sixth among nine siblings. His father, Abdul Rehman Khan, was a Sunni Pathan from Kabul who had fought against the British in the Second Anglo-Afghan War. Following a family quarrel, he moved to Sakleshpur and made a living as a Unani practitioner and a cloth trader. He married Zebunnisa, a girl from a Sunni Arab family settled in Virajpet, Coorg. Since they were the lone Muslim family in Sakleshpur at that time, Kareem Khan grew up amidst children from various communities. He and his siblings were sent to the local Kannada medium school. The pressure to leave school was high after his father's death, but his eldest brother ensured he stayed on in school, for which he remained grateful.

Achangi Narayana Shastri, one of his teachers at school who was a scholar of the puranas and Hindu philosophical traditions, initiated the studious Kareem Khan into Indian philosophy and mythology and classical Kannada literature. Losing their Sakleshpur home during a river flood, his family moved to Hassan, where he completed his eighth standard in school. His biographers speculate that his great love for folk songs might have strengthened in Hassan, a region rich in folklore. Traders of brass utensils made in Sravanabelagola, who would camp with their carts at night in the field opposite his house, would cook and sing songs and dance late into the night. The young Kareem Khan was enthralled by this experience.

Chandan Gowda
The Vidyashilp Professor looks for new ways of looking
@Chandan_Gowda73

Kareem Khan was drawn to the Indian freedom movement during high school. It moved him when his teacher read out in class the news about the freedom struggle. His school education stopped after his eighth grade due to financial difficulty at home. He taught in a school briefly before devoting himself to helping his family in the cloth trade.

After seeing Gandhi during his visit to Bangalore in 1936, he started wearing *khadi* and a Gandhi cap, a habit that he stayed with till the end of his life in 2006. He threw himself into the freedom struggle and composed songs to mobilise support in rural areas. He was jailed several times for being part of the freedom movement. After independence, he was involved in the state's unification movement.

In the 1950s, Kareem Khan published two major anthologies of folk songs, the fruit of his extensive foot journeys through villages: *Janapada Geete* Part 1 (1955) and Part 2 (1959). He published two more folk song anthologies in later decades. His first publications, however, were Kannada translations of short stories, *Neevara* (1949) and *Nihara* (1943), and a novel, *Balidaani Hussain* (1955). Besides these, his publications include three novels, 20 plays, and over a dozen volumes of poetry and devotional songs.

Another fascinating side of Kareem Khan's writerly corpus: the film writings. When earning a living became difficult, he moved to Chennai in 1956 to work in the Kannada film industry, which was then based there. He wrote film scripts and screenplays for over a dozen films, including the hit *Swarna Gauri* (1962). He wrote over 250 film songs in his lifetime.

Unscrupulous individuals in the film and publishing worlds appear to have often taken advantage of the not-so-worldly minded Kareem Khan, who lived a tough life for the most part. After moving back to Bangalore, he lived in a small room in Dwaraka Hotel in Basavanagudi for nearly 30 years. He never married.

Feted by the state government and numerous organisations in the closing decades of his life, the richly versatile Kareem Khan, however, remains more or less a non-presence in the popular imagination. The fragmentary accounts of his life in two biographies – *Nadoja Dr S K Kareem Khan* (2010) by Dr Prakash Bommanna Nayak and *Kannada Santa S K Kareem Khan* (2013) by Prof D Lingaiah – point to the need for a fuller story of a man remembered on his tombstone simply as "Freedom Fighter and Kannada Poet."

THIS AND THAT

The many worldly uses of religious symbolism

S R Ramakrishna
often sees high art in kitsch and vice versa

This past week's furore over Indian and Pakistani cricketers not shaking hands after an Asia Cup match again shows how cleverly we use symbolism to cover our tracks.

The two countries, officially enemies, didn't mind their cricket boards profiting from the tournament. At the same time, presumably, they strategised how to tell their constituencies back home that they weren't sellouts, and that they remained true to their much vaunted hostility. The Indian team, which won the match, dedicated the victory to the victims of the terror attack in Pahalgam, and our captain walked away without the customary handshake with the rival team. The Pakistan team complained and sulked, and eventually returned to the tournament.

What do we make of all this? A good time was had by all, including the millions who watched the match on TV, till the time the captains had to shake hands, and then symbolism kicked in to save the day, and make everyone feel honourable again.

If you follow the news, you can't help but notice how such symbolism holds a central place in our lives today. The daily routine of many of our TV news anchors is to outrage over which symbol was insulted and who offended our delicate national sensibilities. Talking heads gather at prime time to bash the 'anti-national' of the day.

The most effective and saleable symbolism comes from religion and nationalism. They are two sides of the same coin, going by what the anchors say. But that wasn't always the case. I can speak of people who went to college in the 1980s – they were believers when in distress, but non-believers otherwise. Rationalists such as Abraham Kovoor, H Narasimhaiah, and B Premanand were speaking out against the god-men of the time, and didn't fight shy of denouncing what they saw as superstitions. Narasimhaiah, the physicist who served as vice-chancellor of Bangalore University, was an outspoken critic of many deeply entrenched rituals and practices. He had challenged Satya Sai Baba, who enjoyed a huge following among the rich and famous, to produce a pumpkin out of thin air instead of the usual *vibhuti*, gold rings, and wrist watches. J B S Haldane's essay on scientific temper was prescribed reading at the undergraduate level – education placed science above religion.

It wasn't as though everyone was a diehard rationalist or atheist – rationalism and religion coexisted without too much fuss. Religion came into the picture for birth, wedding, and death rituals. And when medical science couldn't help, or things spun out of control on the personal front, there was astrology. All smooth sailing? The same astrology was consumed with amusement in the entertainment columns. Predictive astrology hadn't yet become a subject of academic study at the universities.

Have people become more religious today? Shrines have proliferated, sure, but does that mean we have more believers in our midst? Hard to say. But what can be said with some certainty is that, over the last four decades, we have discovered the power of religion for political, professional, and personal gain.

To this day, rationalists point out, we rush accident victims to a hospital, and not to a place of worship. We are rational enough to know that no temple, church, or mosque can help us in a medical emergency. But at the same time, we know where religion works, and how it works. The BJP rose to power by tirelessly building on religious symbolism, first with the *rath yatra*, and then with the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The party must have realised early on that espousing a secular cause, such as transparency in governance, wouldn't take it too far. As a people, we are roused by the symbolism of religion, and not so much by the rationalism of science.

In an earlier political era dominated by the Congress, Gandhism provided the safe cover that religion provides today. It wasn't uncommon for scammers to wear *khadi* and claim to be freedom fighters, all under a benign portrait of Gandhi.

Marx famously described religion as 'the opiate of the masses', and 'the sigh of the oppressed creature'. Lohia saw politics as religion of the short term, and religion as politics of the long term. Perhaps neither had an inkling how both the ruler and the ruled would one day simultaneously use religion for their political and personal advancement.

Shots that shaped India

From colonial arm-to-arm inoculations to Covid diplomacy, India's vaccine odyssey fuses science, politics and resilience. Yet in today's world, doubts, fears and scepticism continue to shadow its triumphs, writes Ameer Shahul

A quiet revolution has unfolded in India over the last two centuries — not on battlefields or in parliaments, but in laboratories, village camps, and crowded clinics. It is the story of vaccination, a saga both intimate and epic, where the needle and vial have shaped the destiny of millions.

This tryst with vaccines is a tale of resilience — of loss and recovery, suspicion and persuasion, dependency and leadership.

Ameer Shahul

It all began with a 'precious cargo' arriving from Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey), travelling thousands of miles by land and sea, in the early years of the 19th century. By then, Edward Jenner's smallpox vaccine had already redrawn Europe's public health map; he would pass away in 1823, but his discovery had set the stage for a revolution in medicine. A generation later, Louis Pasteur would add rabies and anthrax to the pantheon of preventable diseases, cementing immunology as the bedrock of modern science.

India's initiation into this revolution was rather dramatic. In 1802, a 'precious cargo' — the first smallpox vaccines — arrived in India, not in glass vials but in human arms. Freshly inoculated with cowpox, a chain of children carried the live virus across 3,000 kilometres from Constantinople to Basra, and then onward by ship to India. Along the way, pustules would heal, chains would break, and entire expeditions would fail.

Eventually, it landed in Bombay, and soon, Anna Dusthall, a three-year-old girl of European descent, became the living source from which the Indian vaccination story began. From Anna's arm, five more children were inoculated. From them, the benign cousin of smallpox spread, first to barracks and British settlements, and later, more hesitantly, to the Indian population.

It was the beginning of a precarious journey — one that revealed as much about empire and politics as about science.

Vaccine ad, courtesy Mysore queen!

By 1805, the vaccine reached the royal palace of Mysore, where politics and medicine converged in an extraordinary tableau.

Twelve-year-old Devajammani, newly married to Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, became the face of what was likely the world's first vaccine advertisement. An Irish painter, Thomas Hickey, depicted lifting her arm to reveal the faint scar of vaccination.

Smallpox was more than a disease in India then; it was divine punishment from goddesses Mariyamma or Shitala. Variolation, deliberately inducing a mild infection with smallpox scabs, was common, and yet Jenner's much weaker cowpox vaccine was distrusted as profane, alien and suspect.

The Mysore Queen Devajammani (extreme right) in a 1805 oil painting by Thomas Hickey, commissioned by the British East India Company to encourage smallpox vaccination in India. PIC COURTESY: SOTHEBY'S

The East India Company, struggling to popularise Jenner's innovation, needed a shot of creativity. By showing a queen inoculated, the British sought to dispel suspicion through royal endorsement.

The strategy worked. Palace court records from 1806 show that Mysoreans stepped forward in greater numbers, persuaded by the scar of their queen. In that scar lay a new kind of political symbolism: medicine as spectacle, monarchy as endorsement, science as persuasion.

British historian Dr Nigel Chancellor, who identified the portrait recently, notes that her sari, which would normally have concealed her arm, was deliberately arranged to expose the vaccination site. This detail, he argues, offered "a minimum loss of dignity" while making a persuasive public point: if the queen herself accepted the vaccine, why shouldn't her subjects.

Haffkine: From hero to haunted

By the 1890s, epidemics of cholera and plague had crippled India. Into this despair stepped Waldemar Haffkine, a Russian émigré and Pasteur's protégé, with vaccines against both killers.

He tested his cholera vaccine in Bengal, pioneering what we now recognise as one of the world's first controlled human clinical trials. A few years later, as plague engulfed Bombay, he developed an anti-plague vaccine working from makeshift labs at Grant Medical College, and by 1902, nearly half a million doses had been administered.

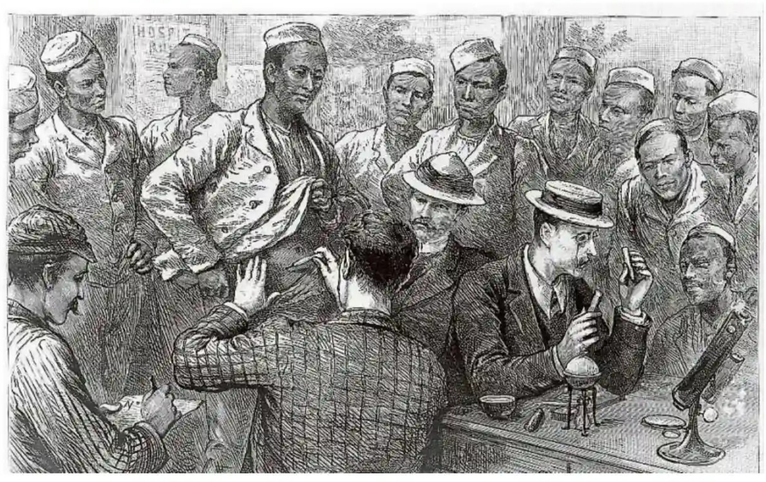
Haffkine was, for a time, celebrated as a saviour. But medicine under empires was always precarious. Trust was fragile, suspicion rampant, and one accident could wreak havoc on decades of work.

That accident occurred in October 1902, in the village of Mulkowal in Punjab. A vaccination camp was held under the open sky. Protocol was strict: each vial dipped in carbolic solution, forceps sterilised. But one misstep — a dropped forceps inadequately disinfected — seeded a disaster.

Waldemar Haffkine. PIC COURTESY: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Within days, vaccinated villagers developed lockjaw (tetanus). Nineteen died in agony. Fear spread faster than the plague itself. For Haffkine, it was the beginning of his downfall. From being one of the most celebrated bacteriologists of his time, he became haunted and hounded. Colonial officials withdrew support, and he left India in disgrace. In his defence stood only Ronald Ross, the Nobel laureate who discovered the malaria parasite in a Hyderabad lab and was himself born in India.

The Mulkowal tragedy was the world's first recorded 'adverse event' of vaccination — an early reminder that trust in medicine, once lost, is slow to return. Yet decades later, the World Health Organisation (WHO) would credit Haffkine as the first to define controlled field trials, acknowledging him as a pioneer who laid the very grammar of modern vaccinology.



Cholera vaccination of the Third Gurkhas in India at the time of the 1893 epidemic. Reproduction, 1894, of a wood engraving. PIC COURTESY: WELLCOME

A Republic's gamble

By the time India gained independence in 1947, it inherited not only poverty and epidemics but also a patchwork of colonial laboratories — the Haffkine Institute in Bombay, the Central Research Institute in Kasauli, the Pasteur Institute in Coonoor and a few more. They were valuable but limited, serving mostly colonial needs until then.

The leaders of the new republic grasped something essential: vaccines could be instruments of equity. In 1948, India launched BCG vaccine trials against tuberculosis in the village of Madanapalle, 140 km from Bengaluru — almost three years before the WHO's global programme.

Three decades later, the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) committed the country to protecting children against six major diseases. It was an epic ask logistically. Cold chains had to be built in a tropical country, health workers trained to reach the remotest hamlets, and sceptical parents persuaded.

The measles vaccine was added to it in 1985 after the campaign was expanded by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP). However, the boldest campaign came against polio. The image of health workers going door-to-door with polio drops and purple ink staining children's fingers became iconic.

Against formidable odds, India was certified polio-free by WHO in 2014, a milestone hailed as one of the greatest triumphs in public health.

The law that changed everything

If public campaigns provided reach, it was the law that gave India its industrial muscle. The Patents Act of 1970 brought in process patents for drugs and vaccines, allowing Indian companies to reverse-engineer expensive Western medicine. Multinational monopolies crumbled. Indigenous firms emerged. By the 1990s, liberalisation opened doors to global markets.

Soon, Indian vaccines no longer required foreign endorsement — they became the global benchmark. UNICEF and WHO sourced heavily from Indian suppliers. From sub-Saharan Africa to Latin America, childhood immunisation rested on vaccines stamped with the 'Made in India' label.

A mare's death and a giant's birth

Revolutions often begin in the most unlikely places. In 1966, just days after Indira Gandhi took office, a mare at a Pune stud farm was bitten by a snake. The farm, founded by Soli Poonawalla, had bred champion racehorses for decades.

Retired stallions of the stud were regularly donated to Bombay's Haffkine Institute for serum production. When Soli's son Cyrus sought anti-venom for his unfortunate mare, the institute delayed it, waiting for government clearance. Approval took days. By the time it came, the mare was dead.

The revelation was painful but transformative. Cyrus realised he had been gifting horses to science, yet when he needed science, bureaucracy failed him. From that frustration came resolve. In a makeshift shed on the farm, he set up a new venture: the Serum Institute of India.

In time, the institute would become the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, supplying billions of doses worldwide. A mare's death had seeded an empire of life.

Indigenous innovations

India's vaccine journey has been defined not only by scale, but also by originality. The rotavirus vaccine, developed indigenously through public–private partnership, cut costs dramatically and became a global success. A Hyderabad-based biotech company founded by Varaprasad Reddy in the 1990s produced India's first recombinant Hepatitis-B vaccine at a fraction of global prices, breaking Western monopolies.

That ingenuity was also evident in India's response to Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), a tick-borne viral fever first identified in the forests of Karnataka in the 1950s. Entire monkey troops perished before humans fell ill, and for decades, the disease haunted forest-fringe communities. Scientists at the Virus Research Centre in Pune (later the National Institute of Virology) developed a formalin-inactivated vaccine in the 1960s — India's indigenous answer to the zoonotic threat.

Imperfect and requiring repeated boosters, the KFD vaccine nonetheless stood as proof that Indian science could confront diseases born of its own ecology, even as the world's gaze remained fixed elsewhere.

Covid-19: The ultimate test

The Covid-19 pandemic tested this capacity like nothing else before. As the world scrambled for doses, rich nations hoarded supplies, and 'vaccine nationalism' gripped the West. India improvised at scale. The Indian Council of Medical Research partnered with Bharat Biotech to produce Covaxin, an entirely indigenous vaccine. The Serum Institute, meanwhile, mass-produced Covishield through a partnership with the Oxford-AstraZeneca team.

In two years, India vaccinated almost a billion of its citizens. Through its 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative, it shipped millions of doses to more than 90 countries — from neighbours such as Nepal to distant nations in Africa and the Caribbean.

The vial became a tool of diplomacy, its cold chain boxes carried across oceans as tokens of solidarity.

The country's quiet arsenal

From less than a million doses of crude vaccines a year at the beginning of the 20th century to almost four billion powerful vials by 2025, India has come a long way. Indian vaccine companies are rapidly increasing production capacity, and soon it will exceed eight billion. That would be enough to cover the global population once over, while

steadily boosting the country's economy and exports — a long but arduous journey.

This is a journey that has been anything but linear. It has weathered suspicion, tragedy, and colonial neglect. It found redemption in the republic's gamble, in the Patents Act's defiance, in the rise of biotech firms, and in innovations like the CAR-T cancer immunotherapy by IIT, Mumbai. It reached apotheosis during Covid, when India emerged not only as a manufacturer but also as a global benefactor.

Vaccines, for India, are more than syringes and vials. They are instruments of sovereignty. They embody a country that turned colonial laboratories into engines of independence, transforming mistrust into trust, scarcity into abundance. In a world where billions of dollars are spent annually on weapons of mass destruction by some nations, this quiet arsenal of India is measured in lives saved.

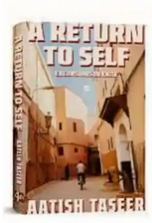
This is not only a scientific triumph but also a moral stance. Vaccines represent resilience, dignity, and the possibility of a better future — the proof that sometimes the quietest revolutions are the most enduring.

The writer is an author, environmentalist, and public policy expert. His debut non-fiction, Heavy Metal (2023), exposed corporate negligence in Kodaikanal, winning the GreenLitFest Book of the Year award. His second book, Vaccine Nation, was recently released by Macmillan.

Taseer's journeys entwine belief, exile and desire, where longing and politics shape intimate reckonings across continents and cultures, writes Chintan Girish Modi

Faith and fracture

The author takes the reader on journeys to Turkey, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Spain, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Mongolia. Seen here are the ancient stone houses of Eski Mardin in south-eastern Turkey.



A RETURN TO SELF
Aatish Taseer
Fourth Estate, pp 216, Rs 399

"I had not arrived as a pilgrim to Copacabana but, in being someone who also had something to ask of life, I became one," writes Aatish Taseer in his new book A Return to Self: Excursions in Exile. His framing of pilgrimage as a matter of happenstance rather than intention is beguiling because it invites the reader to consider what faith can look like when it is not an enclave of the routinely pious but available to anyone who seeks a resting place.

Born to a Sikh mother and a Muslim father, Taseer, who calls himself "a cultural Hindu", paid his respects at the Basilica of Our Lady of Copacabana in Bolivia. At this shrine built to honour the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, Taseer asked for his unnamed novel to find a publisher. "My longtime publisher had sat on it for months before passing. I was mid-career. I was afraid of being put out of business," he shares. When he was assured that the Virgin Mary would give him anything he wanted, he knew exactly what to ask for.

Haunting images

On another occasion, he spent the nights leading up to Ashura, described as "the climactic tenth day in a ritual period of mourning for the world's more than 150 million Shiite Muslims", in the holy city of Najaf in Iraq. He recalls a haunting image of a handsome, bearded man who "fell to his knees and sliced at his bleeding head with the two daggers he carried in his hands, as if he'd meant to scalp himself". Taseer, who makes no secret of his own "Westernisation" in the book, seems to be pandering to the orientalist gaze here.

His accounts of both the pilgrimages mentioned above appear in a collection of his essays, which takes the reader on journeys to Turkey, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Spain, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Mongolia. These were first written for an American magazine.

While documenting the present and the past of each place, he also opens up about himself. In the chapter set in Istanbul, the author — who is now married to an American man — reflects on what it was like to live a closeted life when he "lacked the means to connect desire with love". His words would strike a chord with many readers who have struggled with their sexual orientation.

During that time, Taseer was a regular at a hammam — a public bathhouse — where the men got "frisky" in the side rooms. He recalls the gratification, playfulness and laughter, but also feeling "wretched with guilt", "afraid of disease", and scared about his girlfriend finding out. It is courageous of him to talk about his internalised homophobia at the risk of sounding politically incorrect.

Homosexuality, after all, is still considered a Western import by a large number of people in India and Pakistan — the two countries that Taseer traces his heritage to. He was born in England, but his mother is an Indian, and his father is a Pakistani.

In India, where homosexuality is decriminalised, there is no legal recognition for same-sex marriage. In Pakistan, homosexuality is punishable by law, so marriage equality is out of the question.

Public mourning

Apart from being a travelogue, this book is also a public mourning. Taseer notes, "On November 7, 2019, the Government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked my Overseas Citizenship of India, or OCI, effectively banning me from the country I grew up in."

According to the Home Ministry's statement, Taseer's OCI card was revoked because he did not reveal the Pakistani origins of his father.

Taseer argues that the government's decision was a response to his criticism of the Prime Minister in a cover story that he wrote for an American magazine.

Regardless of the reason, Taseer could not attend his grandmother's funeral in India. The book captures his personal tragedy poignantly but loses out on making a larger point about how the visa regime keeps Indians and Pakistanis from visiting family members who live just across the border, even if they want to attend a wedding or a funeral.

The book also loses out on nuance in the Sri Lanka chapter while depicting the teaching of the Buddha as one that "did not need faith or devotion to be apprehended".

Although the Buddha cautioned his students against superstition, he also spoke about the importance of developing confidence in the teacher as a foundational aspect of the spiritual path.

Saddha, the Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit 'shraddha', is usually translated as faith. What faith means in Buddhism, however, is certainly different from what it means in Abrahamic religions. The Buddha did not ask for unquestioning acceptance. He emphasised direct experience.

WORLD IN VERSE

The freedom of chaotic joyfulness

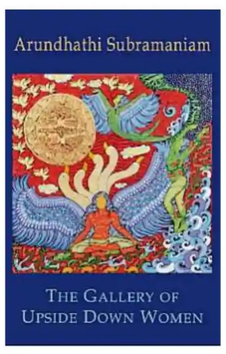
Can seeing the world upside down be a better way of looking at it? Could we better ourselves with a tiny tilt, wonders Srividya Sivakumar

As someone who has followed Arundhathi Subramaniam's poetry for a long while, I approached her new collection, The Gallery of Upside-Down Women, with excitement and curiosity. What would I find this time?

In When God Is A Traveller, she gave us poems that felt like delicate conversations with the divine, equal parts irreverent and tender. In Love Without A Story, the scale grew narrower, more interior, as if the poems were diary fragments polished into clarity. And with Wild Women, she stepped aside as curator, introducing us to centuries-old voices of women mystic poets who had blazed their own paths toward freedom. The women in her work hold centre stage.

Of course, in this book, they are not upside down only in body. That would be so unlike the subtle touch with which the poet wields her mighty strength. The women are upside down in spirit, too. And there is something freeing about it. I can see them, gambolling, rushing through barricades, shedding, elegantly, society-sanctioned restrictive garments and refinements, and hurtling towards freedom. In this chaotic joyfulness, we find what the poet seems to cherish the most — liberation, becoming, being.

The book is divided into three sections. Many of the poems in the section, 'Cycling Hands Free On Air', reflect a quiet contemplation of life during the Covid years. In 'The World Takes A Breath' she asks, *"Who'd have thought/an empty hour/ was so much labour? We walk the day most times/ on steel girders/ of habit..."*



We are plunged, headfirst, into the mystery of 'What Stories are Left?' as she laments the loss of *"heroines/ who once arched an arabesque/ of arm to smooth sandal paste/ over burning acres/ of skin, running restless fingers/ through a liquefication/of hair, as they waited..."*

In The Gallery Of Upside-Down Women section, (I wondered about why the word is hyphenated here and not in the title), we find the book's ancestry. The women saints of the Bhakti movement are, of course, the original upside-down women. There is Meera, in 'The Maker of Indigo Poems', asking her beloved to, *"Blue me./ And since the best gods spill/like vegetable dye,/ he indigoed me."*

And while Avudai Akkal, the 18th-century child widow and spiritual adept, asserts that, *"This is about finding/ that others can steal/ your thunder/ but never your light."* (Unstained By White), Akka Mahadevi asks us to, *"Unzip/the serpent skin/ and go swimming, sister,"* and to *"Go skinny-dipping in youself."* (Questions For Akka Mahadevi).

Spirituality is never only solemn, and humour never trips into flippancy and facetiousness.

I especially enjoyed 'What Do You Do With The Moon In Urdu Poetry,' a touching tribute to the renowned writer and critic, Dr Tarannum Riyaz, and 'When Two Women Drink Chai Together,' a joyous ode to friendship.

Arundhathi Subramaniam's voice has always struck me as one of amusement, with a hint of scepticism, and a wry sense of humour. In this book, too, her voice is luminous, mischievous, witty. In an upside-down world, would being dizzy help? Would it tip the scales of balance in a way we want it?

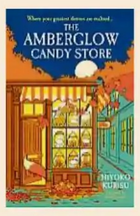
She is a poet of thresholds — body and spirit, intimacy and remove, faith and doubt. In this book, there is less to do with transcendence and more to do with human precariousness. In that sense, we are all a bit wobbly. There is a continuity here that unspools a thread to her previous work. Will we ever learn if we don't stumble? Will we ever be if we don't tumble? Sometimes falling apart is not a bad thing. It can be that first crucial step to a more honest alignment and engagement. Can seeing the world upside down be the most honest way of looking at it? Could we realign ourselves to be better versions of who we are, if we were to just... willingly tilt? And could we, someday, drink chai together?

World in Verse *is a monthly column on the best of new (and old) poetry. The writer is a poet, teacher, voice actor and speaker. She has published three collections of poetry. Send your thoughts to her at* **bookofpoetry@gmail.com**

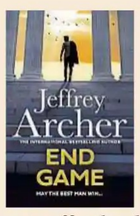
BOOKRACK

IN SAFE HANDS
Ivy Ngeow
Penguin, pp 400, Rs NA
Penniless, Genevieve Ho returns from Singapore to her wealthy but ailing elderly father in Fulham, London. She'll care for him and rebuild their fractured relationship. That was the plan — until she meets his new hostile caregiver.

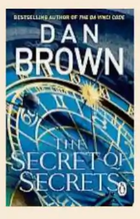
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN
Andaleeb Wajid
S&S, pp 444, Rs 499
Duha can't catch a break. Her parents won't let her get a job; her mother conspires to marry her off. So when she spots the 'most handsome man' at her friend's engagement, Duha can't help but sigh...



THE AMBERGLOW CANDY STORE
Hiyoko Kurisu
Penguin, pp 235, Rs 699
This novel introduces the reader to half-fox shopkeeper Kogetsu, whose magical wagashi sweets from his shop on Gloaming Lane promise to change his customers' lives for the better.



END GAME
Jeffrey Archer
HarperCollins, pp 384, Rs 499
Commander William Warwick pursues a shadowy organisation and sets off a deadly game of cat and mouse which will take him from the bustling streets of London to the hidden corridors of power.



THE SECRET OF SECRETS
Dan Brown
Penguin, pp 704, Rs 1,499
Accompanying celebrated academic, Katherine Solomon, to a lecture she's been invited to give in Prague, Robert Langdon's world spirals out of control when she disappears without a trace from their hotel room.

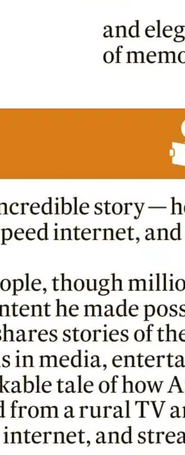
PIQUED

In other rooms, other worlds

Nirica Srinivasan takes us through two recent novels that thin the veil between what is real and the imaginary and explore the interplay between fact and fiction

From the very first glance, Jeet Thayil's The Elsewhereans promises to be full of contradictions — the subtitle, "documentary novel," hints at what's to come. In its first few pages, we encounter the dedication to his mother, "who preferred the fictional over the real", and 10 different epigraphs, which range from Virginia Woolf to the Upanishads, Taylor Swift to his mother herself. Visual reproductions of photographs, letters, and signs populate the pages of the book, giving the category of "documentary" some heft. And yet, right at the outset, Thayil playfully warns us: "The real names and photographs in these pages are fictions. The fictional names and events are documentary. The truth, as we know, lies in between."

The in-between — the elsewhere — is at the heart of this book, which moves across continents and cities, from Kerala to Hanoi to Bengaluru and back, and flits back and forth in time. This isn't a linear narrative — there is no one protagonist and no one story, and the lines between categories like "fact" and "fiction" are porous and malleable. Thayil builds speculative history around a photograph of his parents. He writes of the ghosts that haunt him in Vietnam. In some stories, he is entirely absent, an omniscient narrator; in others, he appears in third-person, a character of his own invention; in still others, his is the first-person perspective we inhabit. We're reminded that all of this is a work of careful construction. It's impossible to tease out what's fact and what's fiction — simply put, that's not the point. Working in a form of his own, Thayil constructs and reconstructs a personal past that feels universal. The Elsewhereans is a moving and elegiac novel, an exploration of memory, movement, and what it means to create a history.



Blurring the lines between the familiar and the fantastic.

The interplay between fact and fiction is also at the forefront of tech journalist and novelist Vauhini Vara's Searches, although for very different reasons. The book, a collection of essays, is a nonfiction and experimental interrogation of technological capitalism and how personhood and language are affected by the internet age. Searches draws from years of Vara's experience and expertise as a tech journalist, but also as someone who grew up with the internet — something that feels deeply relatable to this reader, at least.

The experimental parts of Searches are some of the most interesting. One chapter consists solely of Vara's Google searches, collected together: "Why do wolves howl at the moon? Who do children hurt insects? Why are Americans unhappy?" Another takes the form of an essay about language that Vara wrote in Spanish, then fed through Google Translate. But the most impactful piece is a chapter titled "Ghosts", about Vara's late sister, that she co-writes with ChatGPT. We see multiple iterations of this story —Vara writes a line, and GPT continues, inventing a fictional grief that starts from a real one.

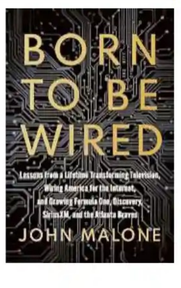
That tension between the real and the unreal — Vara's own memory versus GPT's inventions, our digital personalities versus our real ones, the data composites that companies use to determine their ad targets versus our multifaceted, complicated selves — is something Vara considers carefully and thoughtfully. In Searches, Vara illuminates the ways in which language and rhetoric have created the world we live in today. And she offers us the other side of the coin: language — stories, inventions, possibilities — is also how we can imagine a future we want.

I thought of these books in relation to each other, although I read them months apart. It's easy and natural to rely on categories and labels. But what The Elsewhereans and Searches both offer me is the reminder that, on a micro level, your past, and your self— and on a macro level, that means a collective history, a collective idea of nationhood— are stories, spun with intention and power. Who's telling the story, though?

The reviewer is a writer and illustrator.

Piqued *is a monthly column in which the staff of Champaca Bookstore bring us unheard voices and stories from their shelves.*

READ OF THE WEEK



A legendary media pioneer tells his own incredible story — how he helped reinvent cable TV, launch high-speed internet, and shape the modern media landscape.

John Malone remains a stranger to most people, though millions of us have been touched by the technologies and content he made possible.

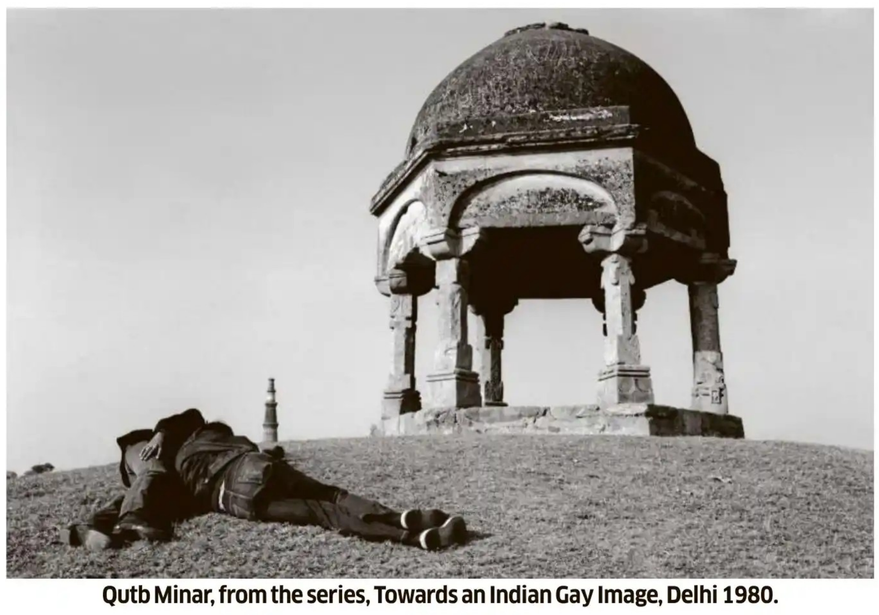
In Born To Be Wired, this "Cable Cowboy" shares stories of the people behind the most transformative business deals in media, entertainment, and technology. He recounts the remarkable tale of how America was wired, and how a strand of copper evolved from a rural TV antenna service into a broadband backbone for phone, internet, and streaming services, paving the way for tech giants like Amazon, Facebook, and Google.

He provides an insider's account of launching cable's first TV networks, including Discovery, QVC, TBS, and Black Entertainment Television. He reveals his strategic thinking behind the largest media mergers of our time, such as Warner Bros. Discovery, and the global concert firm Live Nation Entertainment (formerly Ticketmaster).

After a lifetime of media deals, he reveals the relationships that shaped him, the strategies that sustained him, and the challenges that will define the future of the industry.

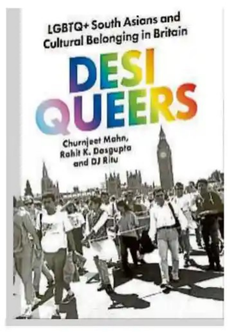
Photographer Sunil Gupta's groundbreaking work challenges racial and queer identities, documenting activism, intimacy, and resistance in a hostile political landscape, write Churnjeet Mahn, D J Ritu & Rohit K Dasgupta

Love, sex and politics



Qutb Minar, from the series, Towards an Indian Gay Image, Delhi 1980.

Untitled, from the series, The New Pre-Raphaelites, Delhi 2009.



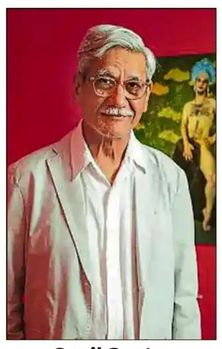
Sunil Gupta needs little introduction. He has been a stalwart in the South Asian queer cultural scene for decades. In 2020, The Photographer's Gallery in London showcased 'From Here to Eternity,' a retrospective exhibition commemorating his distinctive photographic oeuvre spanning three continents. This marked one of the first significant exhibitions to consolidate Gupta's political and often provocative body of work amassed over several decades. In an interview, Gupta expressed his view of his work as part of broader cultural activism aimed at enhancing the visibility of the South Asian queer community.

Originally from India, he migrated with his family to Canada where, in his own words, he 'had the good fortune of arriving straight after Stonewall.' However, Sunil found Canada back then to be a much more exclusionary place, making migrants like him feel very unwelcome. Following a brief period in New York where he abandoned a degree in business management for photography, he made his way to London in late 1977 to join the West Surrey College of Art and Design (now UCA Farnham) on a full-time photography course.

In Canada and the United States, I could pass for various things — Puerto Rican or something — because there weren't many Indians. It was only when I came here (to London) that I also encountered the 'Indian problem.' For the first time, I heard about 'Paki bashing' and was told, 'Paki go home.' I had never experienced that before. Even getting on the tube felt difficult. The 'gay stuff' here wasn't that great, and then there was this...

Sunil's account of London during that time serves as a stark reminder that South Asian gay men were not only navigating homophobia but also facing violent racism fuelled by Enoch Powell's infamous 'rivers of blood' speech and Thatcherite policies. These policies reversed social welfare measures and ushered in an era of social conservatism, exemplified by legislation like Section 28.

This legislation limited government funding for LGBTQ+ social groups, censored what could be taught in schools, and contributed to a rising tide of homophobia. The purpose of such laws was to curtail the support provided by local authorities and bodies like the Greater London Council to racially marginalised communities and LGBTQ+ support groups. Despite these challenges, intergenerational knowledge sharing and interethnic solidarity played crucial roles in the early organising phase, although they were not without their difficulties. Sunil says: By 1983, I had discovered the GLC (Greater London Council), which supported ethnic artists and 'radical' work, and I got... well, I became politically black. After this, I became much more involved in gay and black arts and similar activities. However, there was a problem with this kind of organising because half of the *desis* I was meeting did not want to identify as black. Immediately, we encountered a problem there.



Sunil Gupta.

Sunil's time at Farnham and later at the Royal College of Art, where he obtained a photography degree in 1983, was also fraught with challenges. Presenting 'gay work' was often frowned upon, and the gay art he had encountered in New York was largely ignored or omitted from the curriculum. However, during this period, he connected with other Black and Asian artists and became involved in community organising efforts. These connections led to introductions with the Greater London Council (GLC) and other local authority bodies that were among the first to fund minority initiatives, marking the beginnings of the Black Arts Movement.

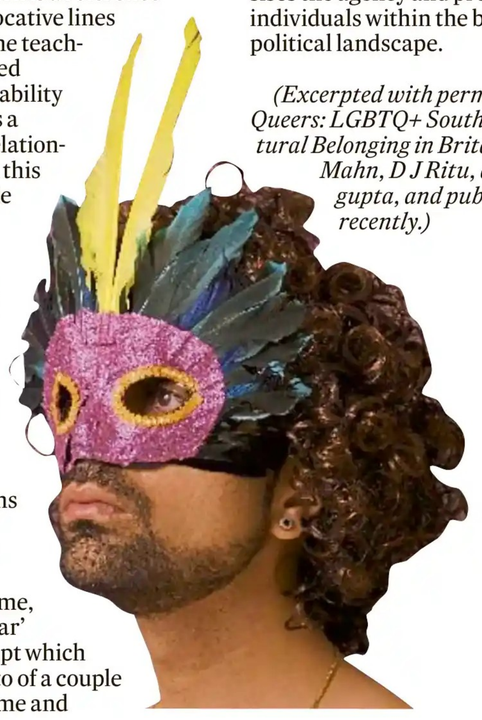
Sunil Gupta's body of work documents significant moments in LGBT history, including the gay liberation movement in New York, the HIV/AIDS crisis, the enactment of Section 28 in the UK, and queer activism in India.

In their introduction to the exhibition and book project Ecstatic Antibodies: Resisting the AIDS Mythology (1990), Sunil Gupta and Tessa Boffin articulated the necessity for artists and cultural producers to intervene in the cultural sphere. Their aim was not only to maintain the visibility of AIDS in the face of a homophobic backlash, but also to scrutinise the politics of representation, particularly concerning the visibility or invisibility of certain communities, notably Black and Asian. Through actively promoting diverse forms of cultural expression, including video, photography and installation, artist-activists sought to address questions of sexual difference and race, shifting them from cursory acknowledgement to the forefront of the discourse.

At a time when the British media often depicted people living with HIV/AIDS in a negative light, the artists and contributors to this exhibition and book affirmed the persistence of love and desire, advocating for alternative forms of cultural representation to address the challenges posed by the epidemic. Gupta's work delves into the biopolitical and necropolitical dimensions of the state, which determine the liveability and survival of queer bodies, especially those of colour. According to Gupta, there has been minimal progress in the past thirty years. He noted a lack of discussion about the historical context and legacies left by queer artists of South Asian origin. Instead, each generation seems to be attempting to 'reinvent the wheel.'

Gupta's photography has documented the numerous challenges encountered by British South Asian queers as they navigate racial and homophobic hostility. His photo series Pretended Family Relationships (1988) served as a response to the infamous Section 28. Each work in this series consisted of three components: a large colour photograph featuring a same-sex couple, a text panel containing excerpts from poetry written by Gupta's partner at the time, Stephen Dodd, and a segment of an image captured during protests and demonstrations against Section 28 in London.

The title of the work is a reference to the clause's provocative lines which prohibited 'the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.' The images in this series, which include portraits of interracial gay couples of diverse heritage in familiar settings of home, work and public places, attempts to bring to the forefront relationships and lives which were forced to the margins as 'pretended' due to their delegitimisation by the state. 'Seeing you, seeing me, it all becomes so clear' reads the text excerpt which accompanies a photo of a couple relaxing in their home and a photo of a protestor holding the sign 'fight.' Photographing couples in their home environment seeks to highlight novel kinds of care and chosen family as well as the importance of a safe haven, where people can express their gender identity and sexual orientation without fear of violence or persecution.



Untitled, from the series, The New Pre-Raphaelites, Delhi 2009.

From the series, Towards an Indian Gay Image, Delhi 1980. All pics courtesy Sunil Gupta and Vadehra Art Gallery.

Gupta highlights queer intimacy as a political act, a theme that resonates throughout much of his work from this period. In Gupta's photographs, queer bodies are not mere passive subjects; instead, they actively challenge societal norms. By capturing moments of intimacy and connection alongside scenes of protest and activism, Gupta's work emphasises the agency and presence of queer individuals within the broader social and political landscape.

(Excerpted with permission from Desi Queers: LGBTQ+ South Asians and Cultural Belonging in Britain by Churnjeet Mahn, D J Ritu, and Rohit K Dasgupta, and published by Westland recently.)

Travel

Namibia: Where the desert meets the wild

Namibia's vast deserts, rich wildlife, and ancient wonders create a timeless escape where nature, history, and adventure converge in striking harmony, writes Joseph Andrews

The Hohenzollernhaus heritage building is a striking landmark in Swakopmund, Namibia.

Heritage buildings in Swakopmund bear a distinct German colonial architecture. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

Elephants at Okaukuejo waterhole.

A herd of blue wildbeest in Etosha.

Namibia holds a special appeal for those seeking an escape from crowded cities and traffic. With just 2.6 million citizens spread across an area one-fourth the size of India, it is the second least densely populated country in the world after Mongolia (excluding Greenland). Yet, what Namibia lacks in people, it makes up for in sheer density of natural wonders, dramatic landscapes, and striking tourist attractions.

Sossusvlei, meaning "Dead-end Marsh," is the face of Namibian tourism, its orange-hued dunes splashed across postcards and travel campaigns. Located in the southern Namib Desert — the oldest desert in the world — Sossusvlei is technically the drainage basin of the ephemeral Tsauchab River. The dunes here rank among the highest in the world. The tallest, known as Big Daddy, rises 325 metres and challenges visitors eager to climb it. At its base lies Deadvlei, or "Dead Marsh," an otherworldly spectacle. Around a thousand years ago, a forest of camel thorn trees was cut off from water by encroaching dunes. In the desert heat, the trees dried out and fossilised, leaving behind skeletal remains standing stark against the dazzling white clay pan. The approach itself is magical — the 30-kilometre "Dune Corridor," flanked by dunes on either side, creates a surreal passageway.

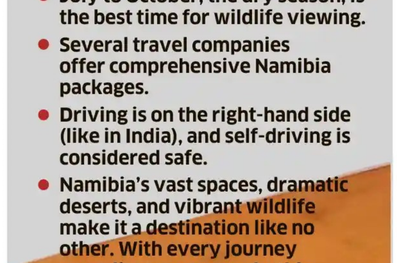
Another must-see is the charming beach resort town of Swakopmund. Its mild climate once drew German colonists, and today the town retains its colonial-era architecture in beautifully preserved buildings. A short drive away, Walvis Bay offers dolphin and whale-watching cruises, as well as dune bashing adventures where desert sands tumble dramatically into the sea — one of the rare places in the world where ocean and desert meet.

The Walvis Bay wetlands are home to thousands of pink flamingoes, adding a vivid colour to the landscape. In the desert nearby, visitors encounter the extraordinary Welwitschia plant, Namibia's national emblem, with some specimens believed to be over 1,000 years old. Despite its arid climate, Namibia boasts remarkable wildlife. Etosha National Park rivals Sossusvlei as the country's top draw. Built around a vast salt pan, Etosha is among Africa's most accessible game reserves, thanks to its open vegetation and abundant waterholes, both natural and man-made. These guarantee sightings of wildlife in an impressive variety. Lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, rhino, hyena, jackal, kudu, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, springbok, impala, ostrich, and even the elusive honey badger are frequently spotted, alongside hundreds of bird species. Night safaris heighten the drama of the wilderness, as nocturnal hunters stir under the starlit sky.

Namibia also preserves some of humankind's earliest artistic expressions. The rock engravings of Twyfelfontein, created by San (Bushmen) hunter-gatherers, date back between 2,000 and 6,000 years. Over 2,500 carvings of animals and hunting scenes offer a fascinating glimpse into ancient life.

Close by, the Petrified Forest presents fossilised tree trunks believed to be 200 million years old. Compared to this, the famed Hoba Meteorite — a colossal iron mass that fell to earth around 80,000 years ago — feels relatively youthful. Weighing about 60 tonnes, it is the largest known intact meteorite on the planet.

The capital, Windhoek, is a compact city of just 4,00,000 inhabitants but serves as Namibia's cultural and political heart. German influence is evident in its neat streets and heritage architecture. The striking Christuskirche, a Lutheran church with Gothic spires, stands as the city's most recognisable landmark. For sweeping views, the Independence Museum showcases Namibia's long struggle for freedom and offers panoramic vistas from its upper floors. Windhoek also caters to food lovers, with eclectic dining options, including the popular Joe's Beerhouse, whose quirky décor adds to its hearty atmosphere.



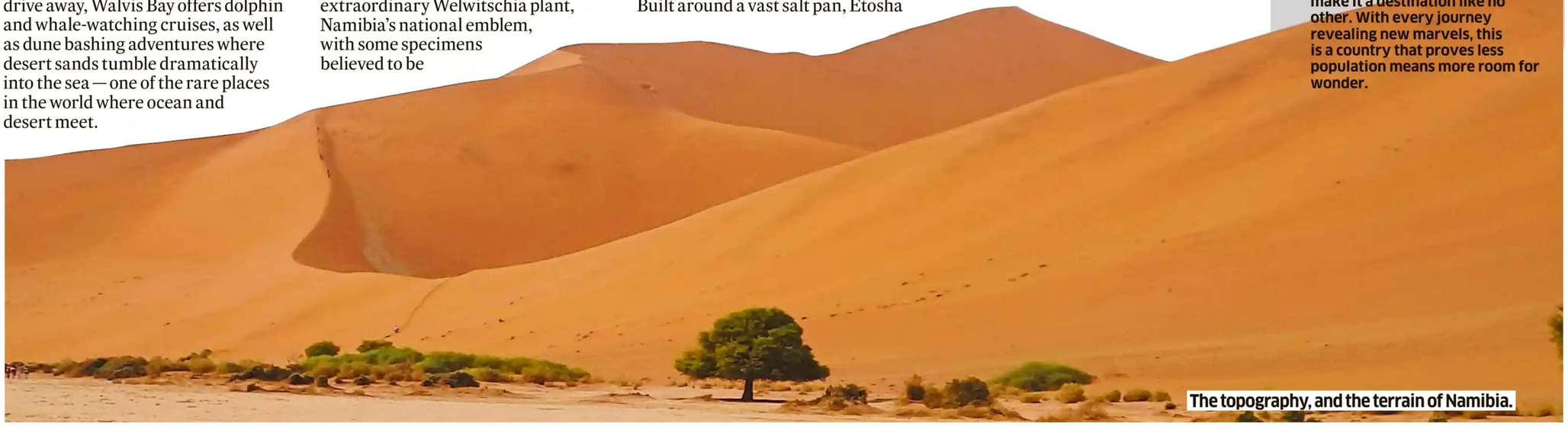
Hoba Metereorite, the world's largest.

Namibia's appeal lies not only in its landscapes and wildlife but also in its accessibility and hospitality. The country has developed a strong tourism infrastructure while retaining its offbeat charm. From self-drive safaris on safe right-hand-drive roads to guided tours with reputed operators, visitors can comfortably explore the land.

Windhoek city view with Kristukirche in the foreground.

Quick guide

- Indian travellers require a visa for Namibia.
- Flights from India connect via Addis Ababa, Doha, Dubai or Johannesburg.
- July to October, the dry season, is the best time for wildlife viewing.
- Several travel companies offer comprehensive Namibia packages.
- Driving is on the right-hand side (like in India), and self-driving is considered safe.
- Namibia's vast spaces, dramatic deserts, and vibrant wildlife make it a destination like no other. With every journey revealing new marvels, this is a country that proves less population means more room for wonder.



The topography, and the terrain of Namibia.

Sober by design

Shifting customer preferences are driving more restaurants to ditch alcohol menus. In fact, food-forward dining seems to be India's next frontier, writes Ruth Dsouza Prabhu

Small plates at Burma Burma.

For many diners, a night out begins with scanning the wine list. But at a growing number of restaurants across India, there isn't one. Instead, restaurateurs are putting their food — and increasingly, creative zero-proof drinks — at the centre of the experience.

A Neapolitan trattoria has opened its doors in Bengaluru, offering Napoli's famed Panuozzo (pizza sandwich), Charcoal Spaghetti with Garlic Butter Lobster, and Burrata and Nduja Ravioli, among many other dishes. A diner's first instinct? To scan the menu for wine. But at Serious Slice, there isn't one.

For restaurateur Anirudh Kheny, leaving alcohol off the menu has been a deliberate decision — a food-forward approach, rather than a bar-led one.

Charcoal spaghetti with garlic butter lobster at Serious Slice.

Tracing this trend, Burma Burma, a speciality Burmese restaurant and tea room with a pan-India presence, may well have set the precedent when it launched in 2014. In the past two years alone, non-alcoholic beverages have grown from three to eight per cent of its sales — enough motivation to debut a new zero-proof cocktail menu at its latest Mumbai outpost in Palladium Mall.

The menu highlights Burmese ingredients such as laphet (fermented tea leaves), tamarind, jaggery, kaffir lime, and green tea.

More recently, premium dining spaces like Nāvu, Kopitiam Lah, Riko, Kebapci, and Kalpaney (all in Bengaluru) have opened their doors without alcohol menus, again by choice. Zero-proof, or zero-ABV (alcohol by volume) drinks, have long been part of beverage menus, but now they are enjoying an elevated, central place.

What's driving the change

Examining the role of spirits' menus in restaurants, Avinash Kapoli, founder of Kompany Hospitality, says: "Traditionally, alcohol menus have been considered strong revenue drivers — with their high margins, pairing potential, and ability to create a 'complete' dining experience. But in the last few years, restaurants like Kalpaney (which I co-founded) and Kopitiam Lah have shown that when the food is exceptional, guests come for the cuisine, not the bar programme." The shift extends beyond zero-ABV cocktails. Younger diners are increasingly gravitating towards coffee raves, curated coffee tastings, matcha ceremonies, and gourmet tea programmes. According to Kapoli, "These formats deliver the same sense of ritual and social connection as a bar — but without alcohol. They are fast becoming aspirational lifestyle choices."

Confit parsnips at Nāvu.

Sometimes the decision is pragmatic. "Steep licensing fees, complex regulations, and bureaucratic delays often deter restaurateurs from pursuing full liquor licences," says hospitality professional Aslam Gafoor. "Instead, these establishments focus on their culinary strengths, allowing food to take centre stage."

Kheny agrees, adding, "India's on-premise economics are shaped by state policy. Liquor licensing and compliance are costly and volatile. While gross margins on drinks often outpace food, venue-level net revenue depends on the licence footprint, taxes, and operating discipline. In India, policy shocks — fee hikes, dry days, tax changes — can quickly shrink bar revenues. The old line, 'the bar pays for everything,' is not universally true anymore."

Ground realities reflect this sentiment. Increasingly, there is a growing space between "wanting a drink" and "wanting alcohol." Scarlett House, which recently opened in Juhu, Mumbai, has tapped into this awareness with a dedicated Hydration Bar. Alongside cocktails, they serve flavoured waters, functional coolers, and smoothie-style blends — designed for consumers who want alternatives, without defaulting to coffee or alcohol.

At Nāvu in Bengaluru, alcohol has never been considered necessary to make the experience feel complete. Guests come for the flavours on the plate, conversations at the table, and the ease of the space. Co-founder Kanishka Sharma observes a gradual increase in restaurants choosing to go non-alcoholic: "You see it most in places where the focus is very defined — whether that's a particular style of cooking, a wellness-led approach, or a chef-driven menu that lets the food do the heavy lifting. We're also seeing more diners consciously choosing sobriety and actively seeking restaurants that don't serve alcohol. That number is steadily growing."

For others, cultural identity plays a defining role. At Kopitiam Lah, the decision to exclude alcohol was deliberate, rooted in the heritage of the kopitiam. In Malaysia, kopitiams are community spaces where families gather over food and conversation. Alcohol has never been part of that experience. Here too, the beverage programme isn't an afterthought — it is crafted with as much complexity, depth, and tradition as any bar menu.

Capricciosa pizza at Serious Slice.

A question of resources

For restaurateurs like Aasim Shah, founder and MD of Kofteci Food-Kraft Pvt Ltd, which operates Riko and Kebapci, the choice comes down to focus.

"I've always wanted the spotlight on food, the story behind each dish, and the experience it creates. Beyond regulatory hurdles, alcohol service demands resources: skilled bartenders, proper bar management, and constant attention to maintain standards. That requires significant energy and investment, which can be challenging," he says.

Looking ahead

Going alcohol-free — whether fully or through equal focus on non-alcoholic offerings — is becoming integral to how India's dining scene evolves. The drivers are varied: shifting customer preferences, wellness trends, regulatory complexity, cultural identities, and the ambitions of new restaurant ventures.

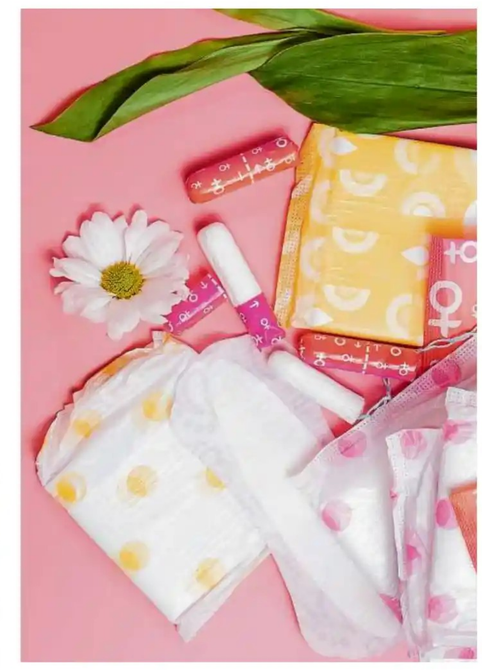
Salman Sait, co-founder of Investorant, a fractional F&B investment platform, points out that traditional premium dining — particularly in five-star hotels — will continue to rely on alcohol menus for revenue. "These establishments cater to business clients, social gatherings, and entertainment. The bar programme is critical for them. That said, demographics are shifting. Diners are now seeking food-forward experiences. Zero-ABV beverages let diners sip something elevated without feeling compelled to order alcohol. These drinks are not revenue replacements yet, but they are a growing complement."

As Gafoor adds, "It's likely that more restaurants — especially those specialising in regional cuisines, wellness-focused concepts, and boutique chef-driven formats — will choose to forgo alcohol entirely. Such establishments appeal to health-conscious diners, families, multigenerational groups, and cultural or religious communities that value teetotal dining. By doing so, they align with their audiences' preferences while carving out a distinct identity in a competitive premium dining market."

Trends, however, remain cyclical and unpredictable. The only constant is the diner's appetite for innovation, novelty, personalised hospitality, and uncompromising quality.

Breaking the silence on UTI in adolescents

Adolescent girls face a higher risk of UTIs due to anatomy, hormones, and hygiene. Early recognition and prevention ensure better health, writes Dr Ashwini Anil Kumar Sirapanasetty



Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) is one of the most common bacterial infections affecting adolescent girls. While often brushed aside as a minor inconvenience, a UTI can significantly affect a young girl's health, daily routine, and emotional well-being. Recognising the signs early, understanding the causes, and knowing how to prevent and treat UTIs can go a long way in protecting adolescent health.

What is a Urinary Tract Infection?

A UTI is an infection in any part of the urinary system, which includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. Most UTIs involve the lower urinary tract — the bladder and the urethra. When bacteria, commonly Escherichia coli (E. coli), enter the urinary tract and multiply, an infection can occur. Although anyone can get a UTI, adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable due to a combination of anatomical, hormonal, and behavioural factors.

Why are adolescent girls at greater risk?

Several factors contribute to the higher prevalence of UTIs in adolescent girls:

- **Shorter urethra:** Girls have a shorter urethra than boys, which allows bacteria quicker access to the bladder.
- **Hormonal changes:** Puberty brings hormonal changes that can alter the vaginal flora, sometimes making it easier for bacteria to thrive.
- **Menstruation and hygiene practices:** Improper menstrual hygiene or using scented sanitary products can irritate the urethra and increase susceptibility to infection.
- **Sexual activity:** For sexually active adolescents, UTIs can be more frequent, especially without proper hygiene or urination after intercourse.
- **Clothing choices:** Tight-fitting clothes, synthetic underwear, and prolonged use of wet swimsuits can create a warm, moist environment conducive to bacterial growth.

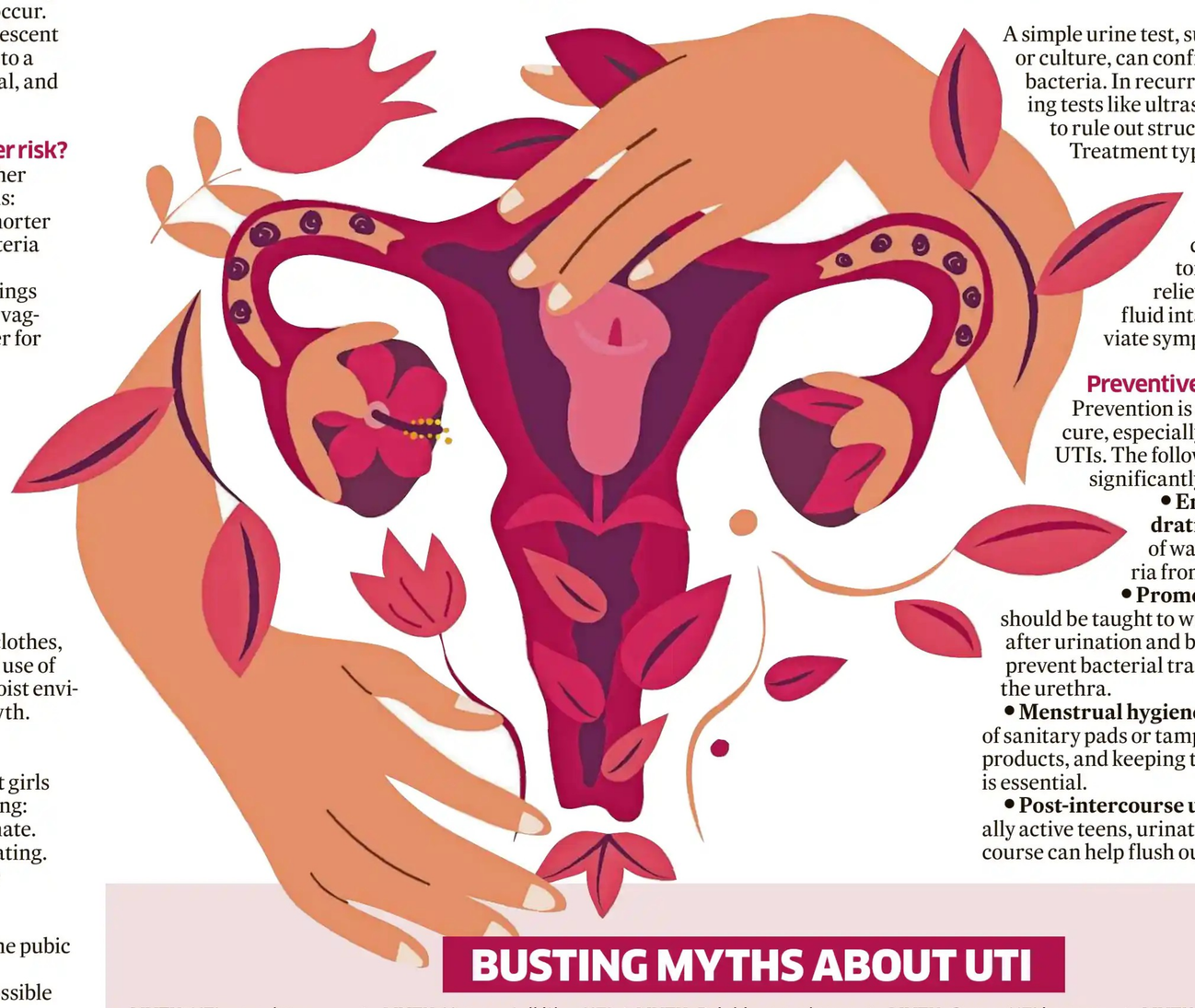
Symptoms to watch for

The symptoms of a UTI in adolescent girls can vary from mild to severe, including:

- A strong, persistent urge to urinate.
- A burning sensation while urinating.
- Passing lesser amounts of urine frequently.
- Cloudy or foul-smelling urine.
- Pelvic pain, especially around the pubic bone.
- Fever and chills (indicating a possible upper urinary tract infection).
- Parents and caregivers must take these symptoms seriously. If left untreated, a lower UTI can ascend to the kidneys, causing a more serious infection called pyelonephritis.

Diagnosis & treatment

Diagnosis of a UTI is usually straightforward. A simple urine test, such as a urine dipstick or culture, can confirm the presence of bacteria. In recurrent cases, other imaging tests like ultrasound may be needed to rule out structural abnormalities. Treatment typically involves a short course of oral antibiotics. It is important to complete the full course even if symptoms subside early. Pain relievers and increased fluid intake can also help alleviate symptoms.



Preventive measures

Prevention is always better than cure, especially in cases of recurring UTIs. The following strategies can significantly reduce the risk:

- **Encourage proper hydration:** Drinking plenty of water helps flush bacteria from the urinary tract.
- **Promote hygiene:** Girls should be taught to wipe from front to back after urination and bowel movements to prevent bacterial transfer from the anus to the urethra.
- **Menstrual hygiene:** Regular changing of sanitary pads or tampons, using unscented products, and keeping the genital area clean is essential.
- **Post-intercourse urination:** For sexually active teens, urinating soon after intercourse can help flush out bacteria.
- **Avoid irritants:** Bubble baths, feminine sprays, and harsh soaps can irritate the urethra and should be avoided.
- **Wear breathable clothing:** Cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes allow airflow and reduce moisture accumulation.

When to worry about recurrent UTIs

If a girl has more than three UTIs in a year, it is considered recurrent. This might point to an underlying issue such as anatomical abnormalities, urinary reflux, or behavioural patterns like habitual urine holding. Recurrent UTIs warrant a thorough evaluation by a paediatrician or gynaecologist.

Emotional & social impact

Beyond physical discomfort, UTIs can also affect an adolescent's emotional and social life. Frequent pain, repeated doctor visits, and school absenteeism can lead to stress and embarrassment. Open communication between parents and their daughters is essential. Reassuring the child that UTIs are common and treatable can ease anxiety and promote timely medical attention.

Urinary Tract Infections in adolescent girls are common but need not be a recurring or debilitating issue. Awareness, education, and preventive measures can drastically reduce the incidence and impact of UTIs. As a gynaecologist, I often find that simple lifestyle changes coupled with prompt treatment can restore both health and confidence in young girls. Let's break the silence around urinary health and empower our adolescents with the knowledge they need to take control of their well-being.

(The author is an obstetrics & gynaecology surgeon, and a counsellor at the Army Wives Welfare Association.)

BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT UTI

MYTH: UTIs are always caused by poor hygiene.

FACT: While hygiene plays a role, hormonal changes, anatomy, and even tight clothing can contribute. Even girls with good hygiene can get UTIs.

MYTH: You can tell it's a UTI only if there's pain during urination.

FACT: Some girls may not have pain but still show symptoms like cloudy urine, frequent urination, or pelvic discomfort.

MYTH: Drinking cranberry juice cures UTIs.

FACT: Cranberry juice may help prevent some infections, but it is not a treatment. Antibiotics are usually required to treat active infections.

MYTH: Once a UTI is gone, there's nothing more to worry about.

FACT: Recurrent UTIs can signal underlying issues and should be discussed with a doctor.It is best not to attempt self-medication.

MYTH: Only adults get UTIs.

FACT: UTIs are common in children and adolescents, especially girls, due to their anatomy and hygiene habits. Hence, when symptoms show up, take action.

EYE ON DESIGN

With India's design scene going big worldwide, designers today are bringing the country's diverse cultural memory into functional art, discovers Sowmya Putran

Heritage reimagined

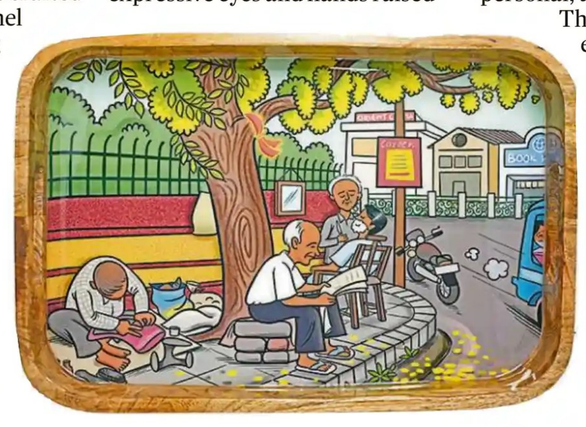
When it comes to design, India is big on the global stage today. There's also a renewed interest in things that feel personal and local. Which is why designers today are bringing India's cultural memory into functional art. From the hill stations of Dehradun to the sacred textiles of Gujarat, each piece becomes both an ode to a place and a contemporary object for daily life.

Yellow Marigold, a studio creating handcrafted décor, unveils a collection of serveware inspired by founder Ella Garg's memories of growing up in the Himalayan town. The series reflects the city's calm charm and familiar corners even as it continues to change; the mochi (local cobbler) repairing shoes on every lane, and the bubble snack stalls selling puffed treats and fried bites that once dotted the town. The collection features illustrated serveware crafted in solid wood with an enamel finish, each design holding a fragment of memory.

The Rajpur Dream tray captures the peaceful life of the Rajpur settlements. PIC COURTESY: YELLOW MARIGOLD

The Rajpur Dream tray captures the peaceful life of the Rajpur settlements, showing people walking with prayer beads in traditional attire. The Kanak Chowk tray reflects the energy of Dehradun's market corners, blending the old-world charm of the city with its faster modern rhythms. Iconic names like Orient Cinema and Book World appear in the illustrations, reminders of a time when these places were at the heart of the city.

The Ashley Hall tray turns to one of Dehradun's oldest hubs, with patterns that echo colonial facades and the bustle of the city centre. The illustrations include landmarks that no longer exist, from shops like Diwan Brothers to everyday scenes of men sitting in corners reading newspapers. Garg also highlights the area's historical charm, noting that members of the Beatles, the famous British rock band, were closely associated with the town and that the Grant Road airport strip was made for them to land. "The illustrations depict a combination of my childhood and the present," she reflects, showing how memories of the past still echo across the ever-changing city.



The Kanak Chowk Tray reflects the energy of Dehradun's market corners. PIC COURTESY: YELLOW MARIGOLD

Sacred layers

Joya Nandurdikar and Amrita Guha of Furgonomics, a venture making handcrafted pieces that reinterpret traditional Indian crafts, use the Mata Ni Pachedi Shutter to celebrate Gujarat's craft.

Mata Ni Pachedi is a devotional textile art usually seen in temples or as framed paintings. The shutter came to life in Gujarat, where the designers spent time with the artisans, watching each line being painted with care as the cloth stretched in the sun.

Mata Ni Pachedi is created step by step, with figures, motifs, and colours added one at a time. The designers brought this same idea of "sanctity in layers" into their work.

At the centre is a painting of goddess Lakshmi, placed between two glass panels framed in brass. Encased in glass, the painting feels like a relic, protecting these layers while still working as a shutter. The artwork follows the traditional Mata Ni Pachedi style, with wide, expressive eyes and hands raised in blessing. Earthy shades of red, black, and off-white, are typical of the craft. The design doesn't copy old motifs but reimagines the craft for today. Even the brass handle reflects this intention, inlaid with malachite and finished with a sand texture, a reminder of a time when even the smallest objects were made with intention.

A storage unit inspired by the crafts of Bengal and Rajasthan, Tarkashi and Kantha. PIC COURTESY: FURGONOMICS

Craft across borders

Travelling across India, Nandurdikar and Guha bring together the crafts of Bengal and Rajasthan, Tarkashi and Kantha, in a single furniture piece. Tarkashi, with its precise brass inlay on wood, is geometric and architectural, with sharp lines and symmetric details. Kantha, stitched by hand, tells stories in layers of soft patterns.

The two crafts stand in striking contrast. Tarkashi feels deliberate and structured, while Kantha depicts something more organic and personal, the designers explain.

The piece has two shutters, each reflecting one craft. The Tarkashi-inspired shutter draws from Rajasthan's archways and jharokhas. The Kantha shutter draws from rural Bengal, where quilts were often stitched with patterns of vines, waves, and dotted trails. The vines stood for plants, the waves for rivers, and the dotted trails for pathways — turning each quilt into a countryside map.

On the shutter, these patterns are carved and etched into solid wood, turning stitchwork into surface texture. One side of the unit carries Tarkashi brass inlay, and the other is etched with Kantha-inspired motifs. Both are left natural, with no stains to distract from the craft. Tarkashi began with ceremonial weapons and later moved into furniture and doors. Kantha was born in homes, as women stitched together worn sarees into quilts filled with everyday stories. Bringing the two together celebrates both traditions and places.

The artwork here follows the traditional Mata Ni Pachedi style. PIC COURTESY: FURGONOMICS

Each work is a passage into a place. A tray might recall the bustle of Dehradun's chowks, the shutter reflecting Gujarat's painted cloth traditions, and here, one unit balances Bengal's lyricism with Rajasthan's geometry. Together, these works sketch a living map of Indian artistry. More than decoration, they carry the spirit of the place into present-day design.

daCunha/AB/1051

Knitting and crocheting, thought to be 'old-world', have gained popularity as a creative outlet, especially for men, in today's hectic times, finds Anju Munshi

Old craft, new yarns: Why Gen Z is looping in

Do you remember your grandmother or mother going clickety-click with their knitting needles? Or a sister crocheting intricate flowers in multi-colours to embellish doilies or frocks? This was, of course, before brand-name woollens flooded the market, advertising men and women vacationing in winter wonderlands, draped in colourful knits. Today, however, the narrative has come full circle. Recent trends reveal that these crafts are experiencing a renaissance, with people getting hooked — literally — to crocheting, knitting, and tatting.

These crafts offer more than aesthetic pleasure. They enhance concentration and motor skills, contributing to cognitive benefits. Psychologists describe them as a form of 'emotional processing,' offering self-satisfaction while allowing practitioners to explore their creative potential.

DAB HAND

"It works as a community support as well," notes Mira Sharma, head of a small knitting centre in Noida. This is especially valuable for those living alone or feeling isolated due to infirmity or disability.

Today, knitting, crocheting, tatting, and even macramé are no longer regarded merely as frivolous, gendered pastimes. They are increasingly acknowledged as therapeutic activities for men as well. Community craft centres are burgeoning both offline and online. In Delhi, 'Craft Addict' in Vasant Kunj offers embroidery, crocheting, and other crafts as core activities. Chennai hosts Sandy's Knots and Needles in Kallikuppam, specialising in training services and customised crochet products. Mumbai's Crochetkari in Kanjurmarg East focuses on crochet work. Online coaching classes for crochet also operate from Srinagar, Mumbai, Jamnagar, and Kolkata, framing it as an eco-friendly, sustainable creative pursuit.

There is no gender barrier. Men are breaking the mould, while children are encouraged to take up these crafts to enhance motor skills, social development, and cognitive function, as well as hand-eye coordination.

Radha Matka, a homemaker, delights in cashmere wool. Rather than buying ready-made items, she scours South Delhi's street markets for materials and reworks them into her own crochet creations.

For women, these crafts have long been an organised activity, encompassing kantha, crochet, tatting, or knitting, allowing participants to unburden personal problems and bond with their 'yarn mates.' The dexterity of fingers in motion facilitates healthy social interaction, and these activities also present economic opportunities. Products are often sold through welfare organisations and orphanages.

For men, however, yarn sessions remain a relatively new frontier.

"When Srinagar was shut down, I used to watch my mother with knitting needles and my sister with crochet needles. The yarn balls spinning around them fascinated me. Curiosity and boredom led me to explore it, and soon I mastered the pearl-and-knit language. My family dismissed it as a womanly chore, inappropriate for boys," recalls Imran. Today, he runs a small but successful business in Srinagar, selling his creations.

"Everyone should have a hobby as an outlet. Even men benefit from productive pastimes like gardening, sewing, stitching, crocheting, and knitting," says Gyanendra Mallik, an estate manager in Jammu. "I make caps and mufflers for poor children in my neighbourhood and teach them knitting and crochet. The repetitive motions act like meditation, creating calmness and a sense of well-being."

Sahil Bacchera from Mumbai began knitting in his mid-twenties. "It helped me through the pandemic and kept me calm and occupied. Spending long hours at home didn't become a problem," he says.

Rahul Jadav, a 33-year-old content creator in Mumbai, taught himself crochet via YouTube while living alone. "The satisfaction of creating something tangible felt immensely rewarding. Do-it-yourself knitting kits are in high demand today. It's an excellent way to cope with anxiety, stay mindful, and manage restlessness."

Joining craft classes or groups is increasingly popular among men in the West, too, offering social connection and creative engagement. In Seattle, some cafés host bi-weekly 'yarn therapy' sessions over coffee. "Meeting like-minded people is inspiring, allows learning new skills, enhances hand-eye coordination, and provides a great socialising opportunity," says Sean Mill.

Even prisons and rehabilitation centres in India and abroad incorporate group 'yarning' as therapy, helping inmates combat lethargy and depression. Participants create crochet toys, hats, and other fanciful items for small children, blending creativity with community service.

TWF

MOTLEY GARDEN

Festivals across the country are woven with local plants, and each celebration is a reminder that we are inseparable from the ecology around us, says Subhashini Chandramani

Rituals as maps of India's flora

Hibiscus.

Night jasmine, a flower deeply associated with the Durga Puja.

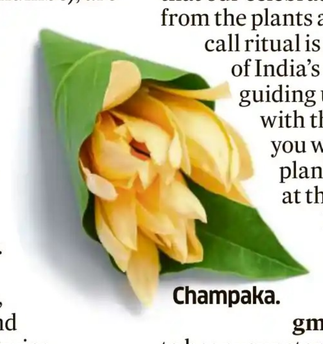
Which native plants should I grow in my garden? This question often fills my inbox. This year, while preparing for Ganesha Chaturthi, I stumbled upon an unexpected answer. The tradition demands that 21 leaves (patras) and 21 flowers (pushpas) from specific plants be offered to the lord. While I am familiar with many of the names, it was only when I wrote them down that I realised they weren't an arbitrary collection.

This is a list drawn from the trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers that once thrived around us. Many are drought-hardy, pollinator-friendly, or valued for their medicinal qualities. Together, they form a miniature catalogue of India's indigenous biodiversity. Perhaps Ganesha Chaturthi is our oldest gardening manual. Lists vary by region and language; names shift and substitutions happen, but they draw from a very similar pool of native species. What struck me most was the range. From the tiniest grass to the grandest tree, the list spans a whole garden. Durva creeps along the ground, binding the soil with its network of rhizomes. Lawns today may be criticised as thirsty, high-maintenance patches of exotic turf, but native grasses like Durva are ecological allies. They survive drought, hold soil together, and provide fodder.

Apamarga and Bhrngaraja are hardy weeds that bees love. Tulasi hums with pollinators while hibiscus and oleander are dependable shrubs. Climbers such as Visnukranta and Madhavi make their way across walls and hedges. Towering over all are peepal and arjuna with their generous canopies, while lotus and water lily quietly anchor wetlands.

Out in the drylands, the drought-resistant Shami tree thrives in arid soil, showing that the list stretches from ponds to deserts.

There is also rhythm in the choice of plants. Mango and Tulasi, both widely used in rituals, are offered not for their flowers but for their leaves. The timing of the festival explains why. By September, mango trees have long finished flowering, and Tulasi too is past its peak bloom. Instead, their leaves are plucked for puja. Throughout the festival season, they reappear again and again. Each time their tips are clipped, we are unknowingly pruning them. This simple act stimulates fresh growth. What looks like ritual is also seasonal care. Hibiscus, jasmine, parijata, champaka, and chrysanthemum are easy-to-grow species that attract bees, moths, and butterflies. Some, like Bakula and Punnaga, are trees with fragrant blossoms. Others, like Leucas (locally called Thumbe), are hardy field blooms that feed pollinators. Even the wild and poisonous are included: dhattura and arka, both are important host plants for butterflies. The lists do not discriminate between the ornamental, the useful, or the weedy. All find a place.



Champaka.

If you notice, jasmine, dhattura, bilva, arka, and oleander are honoured twice, once for their leaves and again for their flowers. The ritual seems to remind us that a plant is not valued in fragments, but in its wholeness: leaf, flower, bark, and fruit all have a place in the web of life.

And it isn't just Ganesha Chaturthi. Festivals across India are woven with local plants. Onam celebrates a carpet of distinct flowers with its pookolam. Dasara invokes the hibiscus and the Shami tree. Sankranti strings up Senna blooms, and Ugadi marks a new year with neem leaves. Each festival is a reminder that our celebrations are inseparable from the plants around us. What we call ritual is also a seasonal map of India's flora that's gently guiding us to live in rhythm with the land. So, when you wonder which native plant to grow, take a peek at this centuries-old list.

If you already grow some of them, write to me at **allthingsinmygarden@gmail.com**. I would love to hear your stories.

Motley Garden *is your monthly kaleidoscopic view into a sustainable garden ecosystem. The author believes gardens are shared spaces where plants and creatures thrive together.*

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